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ECCLESIASTICAL

RESEARCHES;

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PHILO AND JOSEPHUS

PROVED TO BE

HISTORIANS AND APOLOGISTS

OF

CHRIST,

OF HIS

FOLLOWERS, AND OF THE GOSPEL.

BY

JOHN JONES.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MAWMAN, 39, LUDGATE-STREET.

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PREFACE.

THIS volume is one of several others which are intended, if acceptable, to be laid in succession before the public. But each will comprehend a branch of the inquiry complete in itself, and independent of the rest.

Feeling in common with many others the weight of certain objections, which the Sceptics have made against the Christian religion, I determined at an early period to examine the records of antiquity respecting it; and to abide in the result of my own investigation, without depending on the authority of more modern writers. Christianity, I reflected, professes to be the inspiration of that great Being who made and governs all things, and involves the happiness of all mankind for time and eternity. Its claims, therefore, are of the highest moment, and such as to prompt every ingenuous mind to inquire, with all possible accuracy, into its nature, its object, and its evidence. With this view I determined

to lay aside all modern writers, however useful and learned, and study those among the ancients who treat of Christianity, or of the affairs of the Jews and Gentiles, at its first promulgation, and afterwards. By this determination I was the more likely to guard against the prejudices of education, which have such wonderful effects in warping the views of men; to ascertain the principles of the gospel undistorted by any fallacious medium; to discover in their genuine colours the means used to establish it in the world, and the effects which it produced on those who received, and those who rejected it. Reflection soon taught me that an acquaintance with the learned languages, though necessary, was not the only qualification to gain these ends; that the successful candidate after truth must possess other less showy indeed, but not less solid requisites, namely, patience, humility, a desire to pursue truth wherever it might lead him, and above all a knowledge of the laws which govern the human mind. Indeed the doctrine of the association of ideas, as taught in the school of Locke, Hartley and Priestley, though the use

of it in this respect has yet been but little perceived, seems to me the only clue which can guide us with certainty and precision through the labyrinth of ancient records. By its assistance we are enabled to trace the influence of opinions and institutions on the minds of men, and to ascertain the connection which necessarily subsists between the situation in which they were placed, and the language or modes of speech which they respectively use. Thus we acquiesce in their language and conduct, because in similar circumstances we perceive that we ourselves would have spoken and acted in the same manner, or that it was natural for all men to do so under the influence of the same previous causes. To the light which this great law of animated nature reflected on the pages of Philo and Josephus, I am chiefly indebted for the facts contained in the following volume.

The study of these noble authors, with others who succeeded them, convinced me that the providence of God had furnished a great mass of evidence in favour of Christianity, hitherto unknown to modern inquirers; and that the development of these facts cannot fail, in due time, to fasten the

conviction of its divine origin on the understandings and hearts of all mankind. A part of this evidence I presume already to have developed, and I now offer it to the public; though this, I am aware, may sound like an arrogant pretension in a man who lays no claim to superior learning and discernment, and whose only merit is patient investigation. Of the facts here detailed I have long been in possession, and I have viewed them on every side, and in all their bearings. Their novelty and importance will not be questioned, and unless by some unnatural obliquity my judgment is liable to error, no serious doubt will be entertained of their truth*.

---

* I do not entirely depend on my own judgment for the solidity of these facts, having the concurrence of some friends for their truth. Among these was the late Reverend William Thomas of Chester, with whom I was in the habit of communicating my ideas, and who, if he lived, would have materially benefitted these Researches. This gentleman possessed, in a high degree, the qualities that ennoble and endear our nature; and presented a rare example, in which the refinements of taste and literature were happily blended with the simplicity and comprehension of Christian philosophy. He married a lady who in every respect resembled

There are three points of view in which this volume will, it is hoped, claim the attention of my readers. First, they will not fail to notice the charming character drawn by Philo, of the first Jewish believers. In these Christians he will recognize the genuine effects of the gospel, while yet operating in its original purity. Their wisdom and unrivalled virtue must raise them not only above the suspicion, but, morally speaking, above the possibility of being themselves deceived, or of having voluntarily concurred to deceive others, in regard to the system under the influence of which they acted.

Secondly, my readers will regard, with

---

himself, and who took an active part in all his generous plans to alleviate misery, and to promote the interests of knowledge and virtue. During his illness, which lasted two years, he read all the Jewish and Christian scriptures; and his patient resignation in sickness, no less than his probity and usefulness through life, formed an eloquent and interesting comment on their efficacy and truth. He died in the thirty-seventh year of his age, lamented by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. Had he lived, society at large would have had ample reasons to know and to admire him.

agreeable surprise, the amazing progress which the gospel made in the world, soon after its first promulgation. They will perceive, from the most unquestionable authority, that not only its *prevalence*, but the *difficulties* which it had to encounter, far exceeded the belief and even the conception of men in modern days. In a few years after the resurrection of Jesus, the word of God, like the light of the sun, pervaded the whole habitable globe; and Josephus before the close of his life could say, that no place among the Greeks or Barbarians existed, in which it was not known and embraced. The men engaged in propagating it, were not only reproached and hated, but were destroyed in heaps, as the enemies of mankind and of the gods. Nevertheless their cause mightily prevailed. By the preaching of St. Paul and others, in Damascus, all the women in that town, with few only excepted, became obedient to the faith; and not only the preachers of it, but all the nation to which they belonged, in that city perished, to the amount of eighteen thousand. Ten hundred thousand Jews, a great proportion of whom were Christians, suffered persecution in the

provinces of Egypt, during the reign of Caligula; and fifty thousand fell at Alexandria in the same day, at the time in which Gibbon asserts that the destruction of the Christians by Nero was confined to the walls of Rome. Nor did the new religion gain converts only among the lower or middle classes of society, but prevailed among all descriptions of men. It forced its way into the schools of philosophy, into the seats of power, and into the palaces of princes, and made splendid captives among those whom it found most hostile by their rank and education. In this honourable number were Epaphroditus, the master of Epictetus, Clement, the cousin of Domitian, the royal family of the Adiabenes, and Philo and Josephus.

Thirdly, owing to obvious causes, a wide difference necessarily subsists between the modern and the ancient sceptics. Many of the former, though they reject Christianity, may yet be honest and upright men. But they who opposed it on its first propagation, and in the ages immediately succeeding, forfeited every claim to integrity and honour. For the salutary influence, which the new faith exerted in reforming and enlightening man-

kind, was so obvious, and the miracles on which it rested, were so unquestionable, that its divine origin could not be resisted without the consciousness of guilt. The cause of Christianity, on its first appearance, was obviously the cause of truth and virtue; and no one could set his face against it, without denying what on one hand he knew to be true, and asserting what on the other he knew to be false. They who could be free to act this part, in a question of such importance as the credibility of the Christian religion, must have been in a high degree depraved and unprincipled; and to this imputation will be found liable even those men, whom Gibbon represents as adorning the age in which they lived, and exalting our notions of human nature. On the account which this celebrated historian has given of the rise and progress of Christianity, I have had frequent occasions to animadvert with great severity. Indeed his narrative appears to me, not a faithful, impartial history, but a disgusting tissue of misrepresentations and falsehoods, disguised under studied embellishments of language, and dictated by pride, ignorance, and malice. His assertions, while aiming

to degrade Christ and his followers, are diametrically opposite to the truth. Philo and Josephus furnish happy materials to refute and expose him; and they will appear to rise from the grave, as if to avenge the insults offered to the sacred cause of truth and virtue, by this insidious and haughty sceptic.

It is not unusual with writers, in the prefaces to their respective works, to apologize for defects, and to deprecate the severity of criticism. But, in the present case, as far as the arrangement of the subject, and the language in which the author expresses himself, are concerned, any laboured apology, it is hoped, will be thought unnecessary. Not that he has the vanity to imagine that his style is faultless: he flatters himself, however, that it is marked in general with the clearness and precision which are the only qualities of good composition admissible by the grave and tasteless subjects of theological criticism.

With regard to other more material faults, the author trusts, that he may justly urge in extenuation of them the words of the learned Spencer: "As to my manner of treating the subject, my industry will, I think, secure me from the censure of any man. The

names of those learned persons from whom I happen to differ, as well as the errors and reproofs of others, I have, for the most part, passed over in silence, and that not with any sullen acrimony. Besides which, I have refrained altogether from that illiberal fury with which learned men often lacerate each other. I am not conscious of having, on any occasion, forced Scripture to yield an unwilling support to my opinion; nor upon obscure topics have I indulged an unbridled liberty of conjecture; but used a freedom, tempered with mature deliberation."—"Since then I have endeavoured to conduct the argument in that equitable manner, which may obtain the general approbation, I cherish a hope of finding my reader not less equitable to myself, and ever mindful of human frailty, if at any time he discover me stumbling in the prosecution of my subject. This hope I the more willingly entertain, in as much as the path which I now tread is slippery, intricate, and marked by very few vestiges; so that occasionally to err in such a road, is not only human but unavoidable*."

* Preface to Libri Tres De Legibus Hebræorum.

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ERRATA.

Page 5. Line 5. *After* those *read* of the impostors.
88. —— 13. *After* were *read* not Christians.
111. —— 24. *After* rejected *read* the wisdom.
116. —— 5. *For* remediable *read* remedial.
126. Last Line of Note. *For* a future God *read* future good.
216. Line 17. *For* equivocal *read* unequivocal.
240. —— 13. *For* him *read* them.
272. —— 22. *For* support *read* supper.
416. —— 19. *For* innovation *read* ovation.
422. —— 9 from the Bottom. *After* already *read* employed their, &c.
306. —— 8. *For* custom *read* customs.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT must be felt a serious objection to the Christian religion, that a great part, and, as it may seem, the far greater part of the nation, contemporary with its founder, rejected his claims as the Son of God. The four gospels candidly state this fact; but happily for the interest of truth there also is stated the subterfuge by which the enemies of Christ endeavoured to set aside his authority. This subterfuge leaves his miracles unquestioned, or rather it supposes a deep conviction of their reality and truth to prevail, not only among the friends, but even among the enemies of the gospel. My object in this Introduction is briefly to shew, that the Scribes and Pharisees, who turned a deaf ear to the preaching of Christ, were

decidedly convinced of his divine mission, and acted contrary to that conviction in putting him to death.

There is, indeed, a wide difference between modern sceptics and those who rejected the gospel at the period of its promulgation. The unbelieving Jews had the testimony of their own senses to enforce its truth: they saw the miracles of Christ, and could not deny them; they witnessed the superior excellence of his character, and heard him speak as never man spoke; they also knew his predictions before they were fulfilled; nor could they have felt any of those difficulties arising from obscurity in the language, or omission in the writers, which at present occasion doubt and perplexity. Whatever excuse, therefore, can be pleaded for succeeding unbelievers, the same cannot be urged in behalf of those who, in defiance of their own senses, rejected our Lord. These disbelieved not from doubt or through want of evidence, but in opposition to an evidence, that, notwithstanding their prejudices or their malice, did not leave themselves unconvinced.

This assertion will appear to be warranted, if we consider the nature and object of the miracles which Christ performed, the purity of his character, and the direct or incidental notice taken of his enemies in the New Testament.

The blessed Jesus not only healed all manner of diseases among the people, but gave eyes to the blind, raised the dead, calmed the tempest, walked upon the sea, and, though put to death, rose from the grave and ascended to heaven. Works like these far exceeded the supposed agency of evil spirits; and the people, who must have been more superstitious than their teachers and rulers, did not hesitate to ascribe them to God alone.

It was admitted even in those ignorant ages, that whatever influence evil spirits might have, none but God could foresee events which were yet in futurity; and that consequently none but God could enable a human being to foretel them. In this respect Jesus Christ gave abundant proofs of his divine mission. He knew and he spoke to the secret thoughts of those whom he ad-

dressed; he foretold his own death; and his enemies were in possession of the assurance previously given by him that he should rise from the grave: he predicted the fall of Jerusalem; and we shall see in the sequel, on the authority of a competent historian, that the most abandoned of his adversaries believed the truth of that prediction, before it was realized by the event. They therefore knew that he was a prophet; and though they might affect the contrary, knew in in their hearts that he was actuated by the inspiration of the Almighty.

The object of our Lord's miracles, and his own benevolent character, were calculated to convince the Jews that he came from God. If it were possible for any of them, for a moment, to suspect that he acted with the power of Beelzebub, the direct tendency of his works and of his doctrine, was sufficient to remove this suspicion from the breast of the most prejudiced. The reasoning of Jesus on this subject, in reply to the Pharisees, demonstrated that he neither had, nor could seriously be thought to have, any intercourse with demons.

He sought to destroy those diseases and vices which were supposed to proceed from them; nor did light differ more widely from darkness, than his conduct and character from those impostors, who pretended to have intercourse with evil spirits. He came to do not his own, but his Father's will: to his energy he ascribed his extraordinary works; nor was he distinguished more by the power, than he was by the wisdom and benevolence of Heaven.

If we attend to the direct or incidental notice taken of the enemies of Christ in the New Testament, we shall find them chargeable with a wilful and deliberate resistance of what they knew to be the truth. The woes, which the meek and benevolent Jesus has denounced upon the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, and the character which he has drawn of them, suppose that there was no crime, however heinous, either against God or man, which they were not free to perpetrate. In animadverting on their miserable subterfuge, that he did his works by the power of Beelzebub, he charges them with sinning against

the Holy Ghost; that is, with ascribing to an evil spirit those benevolent effects, which in their hearts they were convinced proceeded from the holy spirit of God. For this impiety, he assured them, they would suffer for ages, and the suffering of ages would not expiate their guilt. Farther, Nicodemus in his interview with Jesus, speaking in the name of his brethren the Pharisees, virtually acknowledges that, whatever they might affect to believe, they were really convinced that he acted with the authority of the Almighty. "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." John iii. 2. And on this concession our Lord presently grounds the following language; "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

Finally, in the parable of the vineyard, which our Saviour levelled against the chief rulers, who were bent on destroying him, he thus lays open their secret conviction not only that God was with him, but that

he was the son of God, the Messiah whom they expected in the world. "And again he sent another, and him they killed: and many others; beating some, and killing some. Having yet, therefore, one son, his well beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, they will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves; *This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.* And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard." Mark xii. 1—9.

When the soldiers, appointed to watch the grave, returned and assured these men, that Jesus was risen, they persuaded them to say that his body was stolen, and gave them money for so doing. Here their true character and temper appear: the fact is plain and unequivocal; and it authorizes us to conclude that, as on this occasion, they acted contrary to their deliberate judgment; they acted throughout contrary to their deliberate judgment, in resisting the claims of Jesus Christ. But it may be said that, though a few men in power could have been so depraved, as wilfully to shut

their eyes against the most awful and important truths, it is very improbable that so great a proportion of a whole nation should act so corrupt and profligate a part, on a subject which involved their highest interests. In answer to this I observe, if we duly examine the evangelical records, it will by no means appear that the majority of the Jewish nation continued hostile to Christ and his cause: on the contrary, during his ministry, and at the period of his death, the *people* were in his favour; the tragedy of his crucifixion was acted by the government, the teachers of the law, and the mob of Jerusalem, who, though comparatively few in number, had power to overawe the multitude; and who arrogated the name of the nation, merely because in a political view they were the principal men of the nation. While the majority of the higher classes opposed, and many in the middling and lower classes supported, the authority of Christ; great numbers, no doubt, in every class fluctuated between belief and doubt, till their doubts were completely removed by the opening genius

and prevalence of the gospel, and by the additional evidence exhibited in its support by the apostolic teachers. Nor is it to be allowed that all the priests and rulers continued to resist the evidence of the gospel. In the book of the Acts we are expressly told, that a great multitude of priests became obedient to the faith. During his lifetime Jesus was not without his friends, even in the great council of the nation. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea exerted their influence, we may well infer, to prevent his condemnation; and when their generous efforts were defeated, they braved ignominy and danger, in shewing to the dead the high reverence and faith which they cherished for the living. Gamaliel was influenced by the same honourable feelings; and the wise admonition, which, at a subsequent period, this celebrated teacher delivered in favour of the apostles, unequivocally evinces the sentiments of his heart. "Ye men of Israel," says he, "take care what ye do against these men. For not long ago, Theudas rose up pretending to be some great person,

to whom about four hundred men joined themselves: but he was slain, and all that had been persuaded by him were scattered abroad and came to nothing. After this man rose Judas of Galilee in the days of the registering, and drew aside much people after him: he also perished; and all that had been persuaded by him were dispersed. And I advise you on this occasion, have nothing to do with these men, but let them alone: for if the contrivance of this business be of men, it will be destroyed; but SINCE it is of God, you will be unable to destroy it, and be found also fighters against God." Acts v. 36.

From this speech, I repeat, if duly examined, we are authorized to infer, that the Jewish doctor at this time felt a decided conviction of the divine authority with which the apostles were invested: for when he supposes that their scheme originated with men, his words are *hypothetical;* while in laying down the opposite alternative, he uses *positive* terms. Moreover, it is remarkable that the instances adduced by the Jewish rabbi, were calculated rather to en-

courage than to dissuade the persecution of the apostles: for they are instances of successful opposition made by the government to those who pretended to have been divinely commissioned. And one of the Sadducees might have risen and said, "For these reasons we ought to oppose them. We opposed Theudas, and we opposed Judas, and in both instances we were successful: let us therefore persevere in opposing and punishing these men, and we shall meet with similar success." And yet the argument of Gamaliel was decisive: no one dared to reply; and the apostles were dismissed. Where, then, did the force of it consist?

A notion derived either from a mistaken interpretation of certain passages in the Jewish scriptures, or from oral tradition, generally prevailed among the Jews, that their Messiah, when he should appear, would establish an eternal empire on the earth, and confer upon his subjects an everlasting exemption from death. This expectation, flattering and pernicious as it was, the crucifixion of the Saviour was well

calculated to rectify; yet we find traces of its being fondly cherished by the faithful disciples after the descent of the Spirit had enlarged their views, and confirmed their faith. That Gamaliel should have fallen into an error universally prevalent among his countrymen, cannot be deemed improbable. He had just seen the apostles miraculously delivered from the hands of their enemies; as he obviously discerned, in the shield of divine providence encompassing them, that grand criterion of the coming age, viz. superiority to death, he naturally inferred that they were the auspicious heralds of the Messiah's reign, and that the persons who sought to destroy them, were impiously impugning not only the will, but the power of God. Considered in this view, his speech will be found full, forcible, and even decisive; and it may be thus paraphrased, "Theudas pretended to be that great personage, who shall confer on the Jewish nation the privilege of eternal life on the earth. But his speedy dissolution evinced the falsehood of his claims. The fate of the impostor of Galilee also proved that he

was neither himself immortal, nor had he the power of conferring immortality on others. The destruction of these deceivers affords us a fair criterion to judge of the pretensions of the men before us. Unlike Theudas and the Galilean Judas, they seem superior to all opposition from men. Your united strength and wisdom are not able to take away their lives, to frustrate their views, or to scatter their followers. Leave them, therefore, to their fate; any further interference on your part would be but an impious resistance to the will of heaven*."

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* Εαν η εξ ανθρωπου ἡ βουλη αὐτη, η το εργον τουτο καταλυθησεται, ΕΙ ΔΕ ΕΚ ΘΕΟΥ ΕΣΤΙ ου δυνασθε καταλυσαι αυτο. V. 38, 39. That the conjunction ει in Greek or *si* in Latin, when connected with a verb in the indicative mood, signifies *since*, is well known. The reason is, that the verb then conveys an assertion *unconditional* and *certain*. What grammarians say of conjunctions governing sometimes an indicative, and sometimes a subjunctive mood, is sufficiently absurd. The fact is, that when the writer expresses a *positive* signification, he uses the former; when a *conditional* or *hypothetical* sense, he employs the latter mood. The sense of the verb then governs the conjunction, and not the conjunction the mood of the verb.

The author of the *Recognitions* asserts, that Gamaliel

Now, let us suppose that two sensible and well disposed men, like Nicodemus and Gamaliel, who, though converts to the gospel, must still have retained a considerable portion of the prepossessions which distinguished the Jewish rulers, had been called upon in different situations to give to the world some account of their countrymen, from the advent of Jesus to the destruction of Jerusalem, it may be useful to imagine, in what way they would endeavour to pro-

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was a convert to the faith; but that he continued among the Pharisees by the advice of the apostles, in order by this means to defend them before the rulers, and to give them secret information, in case their enemies should adopt any plan to destroy them. He represents Peter as using this language respecting the Jewish doctor—Qui latenter noster frater erat in fide, sed consilio nostro inter eos erat. On this saying Cotelerius justly remarks, Vulpinum hoc consilium apostolis indignum est, Recog. lib. i. 65. With respect to Gamaliel, it is well known that his name has descended to posterity in the number of the Jewish converts. Lardner, indeed, (Vol. VII. p. 119—146.) controverts this fact. According to some ancient writers, he was baptized by Peter and John. Tillemont, Vol. I. p. 268. Chrysostom says, that his speech was the means of converting the priests mentioned by Luke in the subsequent chapter.

mote the interests of the gospel, and how they would defend Christ and his followers.

In the first place, their prejudices as Jews would lead them, though now the disciples of Christ, still to consider themselves as the disciples of Moses; and in this prejudice, they would have reason on their side. For the religion of Christ was the religion of Moses improved, divested of its grosser parts, namely its rites and ceremonies, which fitted it to the Jews only, and rendered a more pure and comprehensive system adapted to all nations. They would not fail to remark, that Jesus professed not to teach a new doctrine, but to finish and perfect the old; not to set aside, but to fulfil, the law and the prophets. It is evident then, that the two men I am supposing would never in their writings designate the gospel under the term *christianity*, by which it is known among all modern christians; but they would call it *Judaism*, or, in reference to its superior refinement, the *philosophy* of Moses, the *wisdom* of the Jewish laws. By appellations

of this kind, while acting agreeably to their own prepossessions, they would obviate two very material inconveniences, namely, the odium which its enemies attached to christianity, and the objection which was soon made to it, as a *new* and *recent* religion, on the part of those who opposed it among the Gentiles.

Moreover, the same writers, in speaking of the Jewish christians, would be led by the same prejudices, or rather by the same just views, to speak of them not as a recent, subordinate, or an heretical sect, but as a predominant and ancient order of Jews, who alone, or who chiefly, comprehended the spirit, and practised the high virtues, of the Jewish religion; who had flourished from ancient days, and whose founders were the patriarchs and the prophets. This we might expect would be their representation, though liable to be mistaken by modern christians, who are in the habit of considering Christ and his apostles as the only founders of christianity, and who suppose the Jewish believers to be a then recent sect of Jews.

Farther, in adverting to the promulgation of the gospel among the pagans, they would speak of the christian teachers as *Jews* preaching *judaism;* and the converts made by them they would represent, as proselytes made to the Jewish institutions, or to the religion of Moses.

When christianity was introduced into the provinces, or into the great cities of the Roman empire, it proved for a time the innocent cause of confusion and misery. Its preachers, indeed, held it up to the reception of mankind as a blessing calculated to abolish tyranny, superstition, and vice; and enforced its claims by the peaceful influence of reason and example; but they were resisted by the very opposite arts of clamour, falsehood, and violence. The civil magistrate, the pagan priest, the reputed wise and learned, together with all those who were interested in supporting the established system, united against the new faith, and in the absence of real argument assailed its votaries with calumny and persecution. The Jews, in general, had not yet awakened from the golden dream of a tem-

poral deliverer; and the miracles performed by Jesus and his followers they were disposed to consider as pledges, that he would soon return to dethrone Cæsar, and establish on the earth an universal empire. This was a circumstance which, beyond any other, awakened the jealousy, and kindled the animosity of the Roman government. The advocates of the gospel were hence hated and abused, as the enemies of Cæsar and of all mankind: and the whole nation to which they belonged, being universally suspected of treason and rebellion, became the victims of the most unrelenting persecution. In Rome, Alexandria, Cæsarea, Babylon, Antioch, Damascus, and in all other places, the Jews were stripped of their arms, of their properties, and of their privileges, and at length destroyed in heaps, without mercy or compunction.

If the writers abovementioned were to notice these commotions, they would, I apprehend, adopt a mode of writing different from our ideas, though very natural in their peculiar situation. As friends to their countrymen, and therefore desirous to

veil their errors or faults, they would pass over in silence the expectation, which the miracles of Jesus had awakened in their minds, and their disposition in consequence to revolt from the Roman power. As friends to the gospel, they would not mention the efforts of its advocates to promote its knowledge and influence, and thus to bring the pagan superstition into contempt. Their narratives in this view, however just and true, as far as they went, would be *partial*, as they only contained effects unconnected with their primary and fundamental causes. The cruelties inflicted on the sufferers by their enemies would appear the more glaring and extraordinary, as the provocations which led to them would be entirely suppressed.

I have supposed Nicodemus and Gamaliel thus to write, to prepare the way for shewing that two men of the same age, equal in rank, and superior to them in moral and intellectual qualities, have actually written in this manner. Philo and Josephus are authors known to the learned, who suppose them to have been *Jews*, in principles,

as well as in name. My object in the following sheets is to prove the contrary, namely, that in the strictest sense these celebrated men are *christian* writers; that they are historians and apologists of Christ, of his religion, and of his followers among the Jews and Gentiles; and that they have providentially transmitted to posterity facts which, in a surprising manner, confirm the truth, and illustrate the import, of the evangelical records.

ECCLESIASTICAL

RESEARCHES.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONVERSION OF EPAPHRODITUS.—JOSEPHUS WROTE HIS ANTIQUITIES FOR THE USE OF THE HEATHEN CONVERTS.

SUETONIUS, in his life of Domitian, has thus written concerning Epaphroditus, a character hitherto either mistaken or overlooked, though very worthy the attention of ecclesiastical enquirers. "He (Domitian) capitally condemned Epaphroditus his secretary, because he is supposed to have assisted Nero, after the loss of his power, in destroying himself. Finally, F. Clement, his own cousin, but a man of the most despicable inertness, he, on a sudden, and upon

very slight suspicion, put to death, though he had as yet hardly laid down the consulship*."

Dion Cassius speaks more fully of these transactions. "In this same year Domitian slew, with many others, Clement the Consul, though his own cousin, and married to a woman, who was also his relation. Against both these was alleged the crime of impiety, in consequence of having with precipitation embraced the Jewish institutions. Of these some were put to death; others were deprived of their property; but Domitilla was only banished to Pandateria. Epaphroditus, a freed-man of Nero, whom he had before banished, he then slew, under the charge of not having supported Nero†."

The first conclusion to be drawn from these accounts is, that the *Clement*, here said to have

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* Epaphroditum à libellis capitali pœnâ condemnavit, quòd post destitutionem, Nero in adipiscendâ morte manu ejus adjutus existimabatur. Denique Flavium Clementem patruelem suum contemtissimæ inertiæ repentè ex tenuissimâ suspicione tantùm non ipso ejus consulatu interemit, c. 14, 19.

† Και εν τω αυτω ετει αλλους τε πολλους και τον Φλαβιον Κλημεντα ὑπατευοντα, καιπερ ανεψιον οντα, και γυναικα και αυτην συγγενη ἑαυτου Φλαβιαν Δομιτιλλαν εχοντα, κατεσφαξεν ὁ Δομιτιανος. Επηνεχθη δε αμφοιν εγκλημα αθεοτητος, ὑφ ἧς και αλλοι εις τα των Ιουδαιων ηθη εξο-

been slain, was a convert to *Christianity*. The first object, which the preachers of the gospel had at heart, was to bring the heathen gods into disbelief and contempt. Hence the charge of *impiety* and *atheism* was every where urged against them. The spirit of paganism was blended with every circumstance of pleasure or of business; and those who embraced the gospel were induced (in some instances no doubt unnecessarily) to withdraw not only from the amusements, but also from the duties of society. Clement adopted this conduct; and Suetonius hence brands him as a man of *the most despicable inertness*. This accusation, as generally laid against the early believers, is complained of by Tertullian and other ancient writers *.

Epaphroditus is said by Cassius to have been *a freed-man of Nero:* but Suetonius gives him the title of *à libellis*, meaning that he was em-

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κελλοντες πολλοι κατεδικασθησαν· και οἱ μεν απεθανον, οἱ δε των γουν ουσιων εστερηθησαν· ἡ δε Δομιτιλλα ὑπερωρισθη μονον εις Πανδατερειαν—και τον Επαφροδιτον δε του Νερωνος προτερον μεν εξεδιωξε, τοτε δε και εσφαξεν, επικαλεσας αυτω οτι μη ημυνε τω Νερωνι. Lib. lxxvii. 14.

* Alio quoque injuriarum titulo postulamur, et *infructuosi* in negotiis dicimur. Apol. iv. 42. The conversion of Clement to christianity was too obvious to escape the attention of learned men. See Lardner, Vol. VII. p. 271. Gibbon has

ployed by the emperor in decyphering and answering such letters, addresses, or petitions as were made to him. Hence his office corresponded to that, which in modern language is styled a *Secretary of State*, and he has been called Master of Requests. He was originally, it appears, a man of education, made a slave by the chance of war; but afterwards advanced to this high post of honour in the emperor's service by his industry and talents. From the above incidental mention of him, we might infer that he too was a believer in Jesus, and suffered with Clement in the same honourable cause. For Suetonius and Dion, though very different and independent writers, connect their sufferings together, which could not have been the case, unless the occasion of it had some connexion. It is moreover evident, that Nero put Epaphroditus to death, for some reason different from that specified by the above historians. Suetonius says that he was slain, because he assisted Nero in destroying himself, when now deprived of his power and pursued by the vengeance of the people: whereas

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perverted the expression *contemptissimæ inertiæ* to mean *want of courage and ability;* a perversion highly censurable, as unwarranted by the original, and as calculated to wound christianity through the medium of this honourable convert. See Decline and Fall &c. Vol. II. c. 16.

Dion writes, that he suffered because he did not support the emperor after his downfal. Both these reasons are as frivolous and absurd, as they are contradictory. Above thirty years had now elapsed since the fall of Nero; and Epaphroditus had already lived fifteen years under the reign, if not in the service, of Domitian. And what cause could there be for now putting him to death, unless it were that for which others suffered? The above historians, it is true, do not mention this as the real reason; but they were evidently ashamed of such a reason, though the true one; and they would have been glad to allege for the death of Clement any other pretence, than the suspicion of atheism. The conduct of Suetonius is remarkable in this respect. As living very near the times, he mentions the affair in terms, though contemptuous, yet so brief and obscure, as would have left posterity entirely ignorant of the truth. But Dion succeeding him about a century after, when the fact was become more generally known, or more indifferent to those concerned in it, gives a more adequate detail of it. Besides, Epaphroditus had already been persecuted by Domitian, and it follows from the train of Dion's narrative that he, as well as Clement, Domitilla, and Glabrio, were among the *many* who incurred the charge of atheism by acceding to the Jewish Institutions.

We have the authority of the Apostle Paul for saying that, in the reign of Nero, the gospel was made known to the whole palace, and to all others, Phil. i. 12. Epaphroditus was a learned and inquisitive man: and he appears to have been in the number of those illustrious persons, whom St. Paul had the honour and bliss of converting in Cæsar's household. The conclusion drawn from the above passages is thus directly supported by the testimony of St. Paul, Phil. ii. 25. " Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, an Apostle to you, and minister to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was *full of anguish*, (αδημονων) because that *ye had heard that he had been sick*. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation; because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service toward me."

In this passage there are very palpable incongruities, which can be removed only by one delicate circumstance in the history of Epaphro-

ditus. The Philippians might be allowed to say, that they were full of anguish to hear that Epaphroditus was sick, but it is an idle use of language to say that he, when now recovered, was full of anguish because they had heard he had been sick. Besides, if the Christians at Philippi felt such interest in Epaphroditus, was it necessary in the Apostle to advise them to receive him with gladness in the Lord, and to hold such in reputation? Does not this advice imply, that they were disposed to receive him *with reluctance*, or not to receive him at all in the Lord, and to hold such *in contempt?* How is this incoherence to be removed? At the first promulgation of the gospel, those of the pagans who embraced it were expected to withdraw from their stations, which they had before occupied, especially if such stations were inconsistent with genuine piety and benevolence. Thus such converts as bore arms, or were engaged in any department of Paganism in general, gave up their profession as immoral; and thus with their opinions they changed their modes of living. It may be gathered from Suetonius and Dion, that Epaphroditus shewed his attachment to the new religion, not by any profession, but by his *conduct*, having had the prudence to remain at his post. Clement, it is evident, acted a different part; and hence, while he is branded for *inertness* and *atheism*, the same

charge is not made in words against Epaphroditus, who was even put to death without the imputation of being a Christian.

As the emperor was at the head of the army, every man in his service was at least nominally a soldier: and his continuance in the court of so odious a monster as Nero, and in a profession so repugnant to the spirit of the gospel, must have necessarily sunk him, as *weak* and timid in the estimation of his more ardent, but less prudent, brethren. And it is highly interesting to observe that this is the point of light, in which he is placed and defended by the Apostle of the Gentiles. The original term means *weakness* either in *mind* or in *body;* and the writer, after using it in the first of these senses, uses it again in the second; agreeably to a custom familiar to the Jewish and Christian writers, of employing the same word in the same place, in a literal and metaphorical acceptation *.

The Christians at Philippi had heard, that Epaphroditus had the weakness not to give up his

* The word which the Apostle here uses, he uses also in a metaphorical sense in Rom. iv. 19. και μη ασθενησας τη πιστει, meaning, "though now in consequence of his age, Abraham was weak in body, he was nevertheless not weak in faith." Instances of the same word being employed in a literal and metaphorical sense occur in Cor. iii. 17. Mat. viii. 22. John iv. 13, 14.

connexion with the emperor, and perhaps in words not to have made a public avowal of his faith: such a report of him was doubtless propagated by some envious nominal believers; and this must have proved to that good man an unfeigned cause of sorrow. The clause therefore should be thus rendered, "For he longs to see you, and is full of anguish, because ye have heard, that he has proved weak; and indeed he was weak, being *by sickness* nigh unto death." His sickness is explicitly said to have proceeded from the service of Christ, that is, from exposing his life to defend and supply the Apostle, while a prisoner of Nero. Epaphroditus must have naturally wished to visit the churches, in order to remove the prejudices which were cherished against him; and hence we perceive the propriety of the admonition to receive him *with gladness in the Lord*, and to hold such in estimation. At Rome, as in other places, there were men loud in their profession of the gospel, while they had yet no danger or difficulty to encounter. These changed their tone, and left the Apostle to shift for himself, when the hour of trial arrived: Epaphroditus acted quite an opposite part. He made no profession, and continued in office, as if he had not been a believer; but when the season arrived, when he was called upon to honour, or to betray his faith, he stands forth and supports the Apostle

at the hazard of his life. Touched with his generosity and firmness, the Apostle bears him in return the most honourable testimony, rendering prominent his character as a man not of words, but of deeds, and recommending him, and such persons as resembled him, to reverence and admiration, in opposition to those pretenders, who were men not of deeds but of words. *Such men hold in estimation, because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death.*

As the Philippians had the temerity to censure Epaphroditus for weakness, the Apostle scruples not to remind them that *they* had been deficient in liberality towards him now in bonds, and as such unable to supply his own wants; while *he*, whom they had injured, had supplied that deficiency at the risk of his life *. To soften the odium, which attached to Epaphroditus as a nominal *soldier* under Nero, St. Paul calls him my *fellow-soldier;* and in reference to his being a *minister* of the emperor, he styles him *a minister of my wants.*

In his epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul has farther these words: "*Epaphras*, your countryman, *a*

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* Παραβουλευσαμενος τη ψυχη, ἱνα αναπληρωση το ὑμων ὑστερημα της προς με λειτουργιας, *having endangered his own life, that he might supply the deficiency of your contribution towards me.* Phil. ii. 30.

slave of Christ, saluteth you." Grotius and some others have observed that *Epaphras* is but an abbreviation of *Epaphroditus*, not to mention that in this place some copies have the latter reading. Epaphroditus then was a native of *Colossi*, and at this time a slave of the emperor. To this circumstance the Apostle alludes; and he endeavours to do away the odium, which attached to him as a slave of Nero, by holding him forth as a slave of Christ: as though he had said, "Do not have any prejudice against him for being engaged in the service of the emperor: for he is truly and faithfully the servant of him, whose service is perfect freedom*."

Soon after this, the Great Apostle of the Gentiles was sacrificed by the adversary on the altar of the gospel. But the providence of God brought to Rome, and to the palace a man, perfectly similar in principles and in character, who supplied in the heart of Epaphroditus the place of his deceased illustrious friend. This man was

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* While the Apostle lived at Rome, Epaphroditus visited *Colossi*, probably as being his native place; whence he brought back an account of the church in that city. He a second time visited the Philippians, and carried with him the epistle written by Paul to that people, which perhaps he took an opportunity to do, as sent by the emperor on public duty to those parts.

JOSEPHUS, who after twenty years' friendship and co-operation in the same great cause, thus writes in the introduction to his Antiquities. "There were some, who from their love to this subject have encouraged me to undertake it, and beyond all others Epaphroditus, a man who excels in every branch of literature, and especially in the knowledge of historical facts; as having been himself engaged in the management of important affairs, and having experienced various vicissitudes of fortune; in all which he has displayed a mind wonderfully powerful, and an inflexible adherence to virtue. By the admonition of this man, whose example and persuasion call upon all who have the power to engage in whatever is honourable and useful, I prosecuted this undertaking with more alacrity and decision, being at the same time not unmindful of my ancestors, who cheerfully imparted the knowledge of these things, nor of those Gentiles, who are eager to know the customs established among us*."

* Ησαν δε τινες, οι ποθω της ιστοριας επ' αυτην με προυτρεπον, και μαλιστα δε παντων Επαφροδιτος, ανηρ απασαν μεν ιδεαν παιδειας ηγαπηκως, διαφεροντως δε χαιρων εμπειριαις πραγματων· ατε δη μεγαλοις αυτος ομιλησας πραγμασι και τυχαις πολυτροποις, εν απασι δε θαυμαστην επιδειξαμενος αγαθης φυσεως ισχυν, και προ-

This must be deemed a paragraph singularly beautiful and important, as it presents us with a fine portrait of the man, who at the hazard of his life and fortune sided with the Apostle in the court of Nero. Such a character, drawn by the impartial pen of the Jewish historian, is itself an eloquent volume in favour of St. Paul and of the sacred cause, in which he was engaged. But the words of Josephus have a peculiar propriety, if considered, in reference to the situation, which Epaphroditus occupied in the household of Cæsar. See Phil. iv. 23. As the Secretary or Minister of Nero, and perhaps of the succeeding emperors, he was himself engaged *in important affairs*. As he had been brought a slave from Colossi to Rome, where by his unspotted integrity and splendid talents, he reached a place of great trust and eminence, where, after he had been disgraced by persecution, he was again restored to honour; he had truly *experienced various vicissitudes of fortune. He displayed an inflexible*

αιρεσιν αρετης αμεταχινητον. Τουτω δη πειθομενος, αιει τοις χρησιμον η καλον τι πραττειν δυναμενοις συμφιλοκαλουντι προθυμοτερον επερρωσθην. Ετι κἀκεινο προς τοις ειρημενοις λογισαμενος ου παρεργως περι τε των ἡμετερων προγονων, οι μεταδιδοναι των τουτων ηθελον, και περι των Ελληνων, ει τινες αυτων γνωναι τα παρ ἡμιν εσπουδασαν.

adherence to virtue; as in circumstances which menaced his fame, his property, and even his life, he embraced the gospel, and remained attached to it, displaying its happy influence on his temper and conduct, in the most cruel and profligate court, unawed by the terrors of ignominy and persecution on one hand, and unseduced by the allurements of pleasure on the other. The pagan historians Suetonius, Tacitus, and Dion, envying Christianity the fame of this man's talents, and the lustre of his character, have not even hinted that he was a believer in it; though this was a fact, of which they could not possibly have been ignorant, and their apprehension of it appears evident from the context, in which they speak of his death.

It remains, after these noble testimonies to the character of Epaphroditus, to consider what an enemy has said of him. He is said to have been the master of the celebrated *Epictetus;* and in this relation his name has been handed down with obloquy. *Arrian* represents Epictetus, c. 1. as treating Epaphroditus with great contempt, when interrogating him about a certain conspiracy against Nero; "If I have a mind," replied he, "to say any thing, I will tell it to your master." In c. 26. the same writer farther says, "I once saw a person weeping and embracing the knees of Epaphroditus, and deploring his hard fortune

that he had *not fifty thousand pounds left.*" What said Epaphroditus then? did he laugh at him as we should do? No; but he cried out with astonishment, "poor man! how could you be silent? how could you bear it?" Again in c. 19. we read, "Epaphroditus had a slave that was a shoemaker, whom, because he was good for nothing, he sold. This very fellow, being bought by a courtier, became shoemaker to Cæsar. Then you might have seen how Epaphroditus honoured him." To these malicious representations may be added the following well-known story told by Celsus, that when his master (meaning *Epaphroditus*) tortured his leg, he, smiling, and not at all discomposed, said, you will break it: and when it was broken, he said, "Did not I tell you that you would break it?" These stories have been gravely believed by modern critics: and Epaphroditus has been roundly called a *brute* and a *monster*, of whom nothing is known worthy of remembrance, but that he was once the master of so renowned a slave.

The early believers regarded slavery with the utmost abhorrence, as utterly repugnant to the dictates of nature and of the gospel. Epaphroditus must therefore have given Epictetus his freedom, as soon as he had embraced Christianity. As Epaphroditus was a grammarian, and a man of learning, Epictetus owed to him probably not

only his liberty, but also his education, and the elements of his reputation as a philosopher.

Moreover, as Epictetus was brought up under a master who was a Christian, he must through him have been made acquainted with the doctrines of the gospel: he must have been taught, and invited to read its records, and study the character of its Founder, not to mention that he must have seen and heard the Apostle Paul, who was the bosom friend of his master. These particulars will account for a leading feature, which distinguishes the discourses of Epictetus. They abound not only with the virtues and the sentiments, but even with the fundamental doctrines respecting God and Providence, which were taught by Christ and his apostles; though he continued to the last an enemy to them, and to their cause.

And here two questions may be asked: If Epictetus was under such obligations to Epaphroditus, how came he, and he alone, to place his character in such false and invidious light? and if he was so deeply indebted to the Jewish and Christian scriptures, how came he not to acknowledge it, nor even to take any notice of those scriptures? The reply to these questions, if it should appear to be founded in truth, will draw aside the thick veil, which has hitherto concealed the deformities of Epictetus's character; and he will henceforth ap-

pear not the great philosopher and the wise man he was thought to be, but a DEFAMER, a VAGABOND, and IMPOSTOR; and his own discourses, and these only, shall be the criterion by which he shall be judged. At present I shall merely state my answer to the above questions. Epictetus has vilified Epaphroditus, though intitled to his gratitude by his generosity, and to his reverence by his virtue and shining talents, because the latter embraced, and endeavoured to propagate, a religion, which the former despised. To use the language of an epigram, which was adopted by him, or applied to him by his friends, Epictetus was *a friend of the gods* *, and he thought himself free in common with others to hate and malign one, however distinguished, who sought to bring them into contempt. To aggravate his ingratitude and his baseness, he calumniated only when dead, and as such no longer capable of defending himself, a man, whom not one even among his enemies presumed to reproach while yet living, and whom, from the purity and greatness of his character, the emperor himself destroyed under a frivolous and false pretence.

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* A slave, in body maimed, as Irus poor,
Yet to the Gods was Epictetus dear.

See Lard. Vol. VII. p. 345, where the original of these lines are quoted.

Epictetus was sensible, that the moral code of thegospel far surpassed in excellence any system of virtue or duties, taught by the philosophers of Greece and Rome: but not having the humility or magnanimity to profess himself the disciple of a crucified master, he has *imitated* and *copied* that code without acknowledging his obligations; and thus he endeavours to check the progress, and to defeat the end of the gospel, by clandestinely holding himself forth to the Pagan world as the rival of its Founder. This is the object which Arrian had in publishing, and Simplicius in commenting upon the discourses of Epictetus; and they have artfully applied to Epictetus virtues and sayings, which with little variation belonged to Jesus Christ. This is an assertion of great consequence, and on a future occasion, I shall substantiate it by proofs from their writings. Celsus in the above passage is an instance of the use, which the enemies of the gospel made of Epictetus, in endeavouring to check its progress; as he there asserts that the patience, with which he endured the wrenching of his leg by his cruel master, exceeded the resignation, with which Jesus suffered death. It is here hardly necessary to add, that the boasted qualities ascribed to Epictetus, will in this view appear either altogether *fictitious*, or greatly exaggerated.

But to return to the subject.—From the language of Dion, we perceive, that so late as even the second century, the converts from heathenism were said to become *Jews;* the founder, with his immediate followers, being of that nation, and Christianity itself being only Judaism reformed and perfected. And if this language was natural and proper in a heathen, it was much more so in the Jewish believers, who, in following Christ, considered themselves as confirming, rather than abandoning, Moses and the prophets.

From the above testimony given by Josephus in favour of Epaphroditus, we are to conclude, that he engaged in his Antiquities, and persevered in that great work, partly by the encouragement of a believer in Christ. Hence we might well suspect that he was himself of that number, and that the great object of all his works was to promote the interests of the gospel among the Jews and Gentiles.

CHAPTER II.

JOSEPHUS'S TESTIMONY TO THE DIVINE MISSION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

HIS words are to this effect: "To some of the Jews it appeared that the army of Herod was destroyed by God, in just vengeance for the murder of John named Baptist. For Herod slew him, though he was a just man, and encouraged the Jews to come to his baptism, in the practice of virtue, in the exercise of justice to one another, and of piety towards God; assuring them, that thus alone baptism is acceptable in his sight, and not by using it as the means of averting sins, but of cleansing the body, as the mind is cleansed by righteousness. Herod seeing his communication with others, and all his hearers much elated with his discourses, feared lest his powers of persuasion should induce the people to rebel; for they seemed eager to act in conformity to his advice. He therefore thought it better to anticipate a revolution by killing him, than repent after a change should involve him in difficulties. Thus, by the jealousy of Herod, he was sent in chains to Machærus, and there slain;

and it was the opinion of the Jews, that to avenge his death, there came upon the army of Herod the destroyer from God incensed at his baseness*."

At the time, in which Josephus wrote his history, the great facts contained in the four gospels, were known in every part of the Roman empire; and the object of the Jewish historian was, without mentioning them, to enforce their truth, by well attested facts founded upon them. Thus it was known that the Baptist announced the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, which, as then understood to be of a temporal nature, would soon set aside the authority of Herod. The apprehension of this necessarily awakened his jealousy; and Josephus unequivocally declares, that a jealousy of this kind was his real motive for putting the Baptist to death. This base motive, however, Herod must have been desirous to conceal from the public, and to find some less noxious pretence for destroying the object of his fears. The Jewish historian, by saying that fear and jealousy induced Herod to murder the Baptist, intends his readers to conclude, that the story of his daughter pleasing him, and of the rash promise into which he was seemingly betrayed, was a mere contrivance between Herod and his family. Some

* Jew. Antiq. Lib. XVIII. c. 5. 2.

incidents mentioned by the Evangelists justify this conclusion*.

Farther, Josephus does not mention the reproof given to Herod by the Baptist; but he mentions a fact which proves the truth of it. "And it was the opinion of the Jews, that, to avenge his death, there came upon the army of Herod the destroyer from God incensed at his baseness." The army, of which Josephus here speaks, had marched against *Aretas*, father of the divorced wife, who made war on Herod, for the insult offered his family in the person of his daughter. In the beginning of the first battle, Herod and his army were completely routed; and the victory terminated in favour of the injured father. Now, as it was a fact, notorious to the Jewish people, that the Baptist had the firmness to advise Herod not to repudiate his wife, and thus endeavoured to prevent the war between him and Aretas, the language natural for the Jews to use on such an event, was, "The destruction of his army is a judgment upon him from God for violating his laws, and killing his prophet, who had the magnanimity to admonish him of his crime." This language, therefore, points to the reproof which the Baptist gave to Herod as its *cause*, and proceeds from it alone as its *consequence*.

* See Jones's Illustrations of the Four Gospels, p. 51.

And it is remarkable that, while Josephus appears to differ from the Evangelists, he confirms their narratives.

The Evangelists represent Jesus and his disciples, as having one solemn communication with the Baptist; and the attestation then given to our Lord was calculated in a remarkable manner to alarm the men in power, as leading them to suspect Christ and his forerunner guilty of a conspiracy against the state. The sacred historians evidently labour to preclude this suspicion, by representing John as having no intercourse with Jesus, either *before* or *after* his baptism. The last of these historians hold up the Baptist as declaring, and again as repeating his declaration, that he had no knowledge of Jesus till he was pointed out to him by the descent of the Holy Spirit: and the second of them uses the word *immediately* twice *, to shew that John had no time to conspire with Jesus after his baptism; the latter having *instantly* departed, at the press-

* "And *immediately* ascending from the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him. And a voice came from heaven, Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. And *immediately* the Spirit *driveth* him into the wilderness." Mark i. 10. The first *immediately* is intended to convey, that no time elapsed between the introduction of Jesus to John, except what was necessary to baptize him, and the descent of the Spirit: the

ing instigation of the Holy Spirit. Luke, moreover, represents the people of every class as coming to ask the Baptist's advice, thus acknowledging his authority to command them. The communication with Jesus, and his admonitions to the people, are thus alluded to by Josephus, "Herod seeing his communication with others, and all his hearers elated with his discourses, feared lest his powers of persuasion should induce them to rebel; for they seemed eager to act in conformity with his advice."

Among those who came for advice were the *soldiers*, some of whom might have been the agents of Herod, and of those partisans called by Mark *Herodians*. Their object was to entrap the Baptist, hoping to find him guilty of treason, by interfering with the power of government in directing the army. But John was aware of their sinister views; and he returns this pointed answer, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages." As though he had said, "Preserve proper disci-

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second to intimate that the very hour, in which he was baptized, he departed, so as to have no opportunity in either case to enter into any confederacy with each other. The verb εκβαλλει is very emphatic, as it implies that the Spirit, which now descended on our Lord, impressed in the most forcible manner the necessity of an immediate departure.

pline, and do not excite tumult in the country. I know your intention to accuse me. The advice, therefore, which you mostly need, is not to bear false testimony against me, nor any other person. I have no wish to withdraw your allegiance from Cæsar; and so far from offering you any prospect of plunder or preferment, I advise you to be satisfied with the wages you receive from your present commanders.*"

Lastly, Josephus represents the Baptist as a *prophet;* because his language implies that John was the *forerunner* of the Messiah; a circumstance which constituted him a prophet in the estimation of the people, and of our Lord himself; and because, moreover, he represents the same Baptist as warning the people not only to

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* The advice here given to the soldiers *not falsely to accuse any man,* would have been very unseasonable if the Baptist had not been aware, that their intention was to give false testimony against him. On this supposition it was very pointed, and accords with John's usual manner. When the Pharisees pressed him to say, Who he was, he replies, "I am the voice of one, crying in the wilderness, *Prepare the way of the Lord.*" To shew the pertinence of this answer, the Evangelist parenthetically inserts, "And they were Pharisees," intimating that John meant thus, "I am one sent to call on YOU, who pervert the way of the Lord, to make it straight." John i. 23. These insidious men attempted to ensnare our Lord by similar wiles. See Luke xx. 21.

come to his baptism, but to practise piety to God, and righteousness towards man, or, in the language of Matthew, to repent and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, *as the means of averting sins.* Now, in the language of a Jew, to *avert sin* means the same as to avert some natural evil, which is the supposed consequence of that sin. The Baptist then, according to Josephus, warned the Jewish people of some calamity that awaited them on account of their guilt, and inculcated repentance and reformation as the way to avoid it. This is precisely the representation we have in the gospels. John declared, that the impenitent would be cut off from the stem of Abraham, be dispersed like chaff, and consumed as with fire. This was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the sufferings which the inhabitants underwent during the siege, and their subsequent captivity.

The ancient fathers understood this passage of Josephus in the light I have here explained it. "Josephus," says Jerome in his book of illustrious men, "confesses that John the Baptist was a true prophet*" This Lardner calls an inaccu-

* Hic confitetur Joannem Baptistam vere prophetam fuisse. Jerom. D. V. J. c. 13. See Lard. Vol. VII. 116. Origen also very properly understood Josephus as saying, that John baptized for the remission of sins, which was his

rate reference. But Jerome fully comprehended the opinion and language of Josephus, and it will appear that Lardner understood neither. I shall conclude that Josephus in this passage is in the strictest sense a *christian* writer, and that his great object was to enforce the truth of the christian scriptures, by giving a purely evangelical account of him, who was the forerunner of our Lord.

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office as the forerunner of the Messiah. Contra Celsum. lib. i. § 47. p. 35. See Lardner's opinion of these words, p. 115. Origen did, and Lardner did not, comprehend the meaning of Josephus.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHARACTER OF THE ESSEANS BY JOSEPHUS.—THE ESSEANS WERE DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

MY object renders it here necessary to translate the account, which the Jewish historian has given of this celebrated sect. His words are to this effect. "There are among the Jews three sects which cultivate wisdom, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and those called *Esseans*, who practise (as well as profess) whatever is venerable in conduct. These are Jews by birth, and they cherish mutual love beyond other men. They reject pleasure as evil; and they look upon temperance, and a conquest over the passions, as the greatest virtue. There prevails among them a contempt of marriage; but they receive the children of others and educate them as their own, while yet tender and susceptible of instruction. They do not, indeed, abolish the marriage institution, as being necessary to perpetuate the succession of mankind; but they guard against the dissoluteness of the women, who,

they think, in no instance preserve their fidelity to one man *."

" The Esseans despise riches, and are much to be admired for their liberality: nor can any be found amongst them, who is more wealthy than the rest. For it is a law with them that those, who join their order, should distribute their possessions among the members. Accordingly not an individual of them all exhibits the meanness of poverty or the insolence of wealth, the property of each being added to that of the rest, as being all brethren. They deem oil as a pollution, and wipe it off, should any inadvertently touch them: for they think it an ornament to be plain, and always to wear white apparel. They appoint stewards to superintend the common interests; and these have no other employment, than to consult the good of each member without distinction."

" This sect is not confined to one city; but the members of it abound in every city. Those who come from different places have the same

* There were, it is to be hoped, many honourable instances to whom this suspicion could not by any means attach among the Gentiles as well as the Jews. And admitting that, in general, it was too well founded, it only proves, that the moral character of the women before the promulgation of the gospel was truly deplorable.

free access to the goods of their community, as to their own; and they are introduced to those, whom they had never known, as to intimate friends. When, therefore, they travel, they carry with them nothing but arms for their defence against thieves. Accordingly, in every city, an officer is appointed to take especial care of strangers, and to provide them with clothes and other things necessary. In their dress and deportment they resemble children, awed by their masters, changing neither their garments nor their shoes, till they are rendered bare by use. They neither buy nor sell among themselves; but each gives of such things as are in his possession to him that has need, and accepts in return whatever is useful to himself. Every one, though unable to offer an equivalent, is permitted to share in the goods of whomsoever he may please."

"They are singularly exemplary in their piety towards God: for before the rising of the sun, they speak not of temporal things; but use certain prayers received from their forefathers, as if supplicating the deity, like the morning sun, to shed his light upon them. After this, they are dismissed by their stewards to pursue the occupations in which they had been severally brought up. In these they labour with great diligence, till the fifth hour, when they again assemble to-

gether, and after having covered themselves with white veils, bathe in cold water. This purification being performed, they again meet, each in his own apartment, into which it is not lawful for those of another sect to enter; whence they come in a clean manner into the dining-room, as into a holy place, where, having calmly seated themselves, they receive bread from the baker, and from the cook a single plate of one sort of meat. A priest says grace before meat, nor is it lawful for any to taste it till this is done. Grace is again said after meat; thus when they begin and when they end, they praise God as the bestower of their good. Then laying aside their neater dress, as if holy, they again go to their usual employments till evening; when they return, in the same neat manner, to supper, taking with them such guests as happened to be their visitors. Clamour and tumult never disgrace their abode, each in his turn having liberty to speak. The silence, which is thus maintained within, appears like some awful mystery to those who are without; but the cause is their uniform sobriety, and the restraint of their appetites within the limits of satiety."

"These men can do nothing without the permission of their rulers, except acts of charity and mercy, which are left to their own free choice, they being permitted to assist the worthy when

they need assistance, and to supply food for the necessitous. But they are not allowed to benefit their own relations, without the consent of their directors. They dispense their anger with justice; they restrain their passion; they are models of fidelity and ministers of peace. Their word on every occasion is as firm as an oath: they avoid the administration of oaths, as thinking the practice of swearing worse than perjury. For in their opinion, he who cannot be believed without an appeal to God, acknowledges his own guilt. They study, with extraordinary diligence, the works of the ancients, selecting such parts of them as are useful to the mind or to the body. Hence medicinal plants, and the properties of stones, are investigated by them to heal diseases."

"A man desiring to join this sect, is not immediately admitted as a member, but is kept out a year as a probationer, leading the same course of life, and wearing the girdle and white robe. Having given, during this interval, a proof of self-government, he approaches nearer to a communion, and to participate in the more holy waters of baptism: but he is not as yet permitted to live with them. For, notwithstanding the demonstration of temperance already given by him, his character is farther tried two years more: if he appears worthy after this trial, he becomes a

lawful member of the society. But before he touches bread in common with them, he pledges himself by a most awful oath to cultivate piety towards God, to maintain justice towards men, always to shun the wicked, and to co-operate with the virtuous; to be faithful to all men, and especially to men in power, for such they think receive their authority by the appointment of God. He farther binds himself that, if power be placed in his hands, he will not abuse it; that he will not endeavour to outshine his subjects by splendour of dress, or any superfluous ornaments; that he will stedfastly adhere to the truth, and reprove those who are guilty of falsehood; that he will keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains; that he will conceal nothing forbidden from the society, nor reveal nothing forbidden to others, though urged to do it by tortures unto death. Besides these things, they bind him by an oath not to teach any man the doctrines of the sect otherwise than he has himself received them; to abstain from robbery, and to preserve their sacred books with the names of their ministers unadulterated. Such are the oaths by which they oblige the converts to preserve their institutions."

"Those who are detected of heinous crimes are expelled the society; and a person, who is thus separated, often perishes in a miserable man-

ner; being prevented, by the most solemn engagements, from partaking of the food used by others. He therefore feeds on herbs, or wastes to death by famine. For this reason they have compassion on many, and receive them again in their last extremities; thinking sufferings so nearly fatal a sufficient punishment for their guilt."

"During the hours of religious exercise, the members are divided into three classes: and so far are the juniors deemed inferior to their seniors, that one of the latter, if he should touch any of the former, washes himself, as is usually done after mixing with strangers. From the simplicity of their diet, and the regularity of their conduct, they live so long, that some of them exceed a hundred years. They despise terrors, and triumph over sufferings by the greatness of their minds, deeming death itself, if encountered with glory, to be preferable to immortality."

"The loftiness of soul, which they all possess, was evinced in the late war with the Romans, in which they were wrung, and dismembered, and burnt, and maimed, in order to blaspheme their legislator, and to eat those things which are contrary to their customs. But they did neither of these things; they rather smiled under their tortures, and submitted to every species of torment without a tear. So far were they from depre-

cating their tormentors, that they defied and derided them; being ready to deliver up their lives with chearfulness, as convinced that they are again to resume them."

"For the opinion is confirmed among them, that the body decays, as consisting of perishing materials, while the soul, composed of subtle ether, and confined within it, as within a prison, by some physical affinities, continues immortal. When it is disengaged from the bonds of flesh, it springs aloft, rejoicing in its deliverance, as from a long continued bondage. They think, and in this agree with them the sons of Greece, that for virtuous souls are reserved a constitution, and a country never harassed by storms, nor hail, nor inclement heats, but which is cooled by eternal zephyrs flowing from the ocean: while the bad are separated into a pit, dark, tempestuous, and full of endless torments. From this notion the Greeks appear to have adopted their Island of the Blessed, consecrated to those brave men, whom they call heroes or demi-gods; and the region of the impious in Hades, appropriated to the souls of the wicked, where fable represents Tantalus and Sisyphus, and Ixion and Tityus, in torments. By this they inculcate the immortality of the soul, restrain vice, and enforce virtue. For good men are made better in this life by the hope of future reward, and

the wicked restrained by the fear of endless punishment after death. Such are the sentiments of the Esseans respecting the soul, and they thus attach, by an irresistible allurement, those who have once tasted their religion."

Josephus, having given this account of the Esseans, in his book concerning the Jewish war, has repeated the following shorter narrative in his *Antiquities*. Lib. i. 5.

"The Esseans refer all things to God: they teach the immortality of the soul, and hold forth the reward of virtue to be most glorious. They send gifts to the temple, but they differ from the other Jews in their ideas of purification. For this reason they are excluded from the holy place, and do not offer sacrifice, themselves being the only acceptable sacrifice which they offer to God. Their principles and conduct in other respects, too, are far better than those of other men; nor do they pursue any employment but the cultivation of the ground. They deserve to be admired beyond all other men who profess virtue, for their justice and equality. For in opposition to every selfish consideration, they make their goods common property, whence the rich has not greater command or enjoyment of his own than those who have no legal claim to them. This practice has not obtained among the Greeks or barbarians for any length of time, nor in any individual in-

stance, though it has been long established by the Esseans. The men who do these things exceed four thousand, maintaining withal neither wives nor keeping slaves, as thinking the latter to be contrary to justice, and the former to be productive of domestic broils. As they live in a distinct community, they supply the place of slaves by each administering to the wants of the other. They elect good and holy men to be stewards over their revenues, in order to provide corn, and a supply of such things as the ground produces. The course of life which they pursue, is exempt from change or the caprices of fashion; and they bear some resemblance to the clans or communities said to subsist among the Dacians."

Such is the character which Josephus gives of the Esseans. I proceed to shew that in the number of these was John the Baptist; and that he was the chief teacher of the sect, when our Lord appeared in the world.

This people has long been the subject of much fruitless dispute in England and on the continent; and the learned have not been able to withdraw the veil that hangs on the question; because they took it for granted, that Josephus was either hostile or indifferent to Christ and his cause.

In the writings of the New Testament, no notice is taken of the Esseans; nor is there even an

allusion made to them, and their opinions, as a distinct sect of Jews. This is a remarkable circumstance; and the more so, as the christian scriptures are beyond all other ancient compositions interwoven with local events, and abound with allusions to persons and places. The Scribes, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, are often mentioned, and their peculiar notions frequently alluded to in the four gospels. Even the courtiers, who flattered Herod, and the transient followers of Judas the Galilean, are not left unnoticed. How, then, came the Esseans to have been overlooked, especially as they formed a sect in the highest degree respectable and numerous, and in many respects closely resembling the followers of Jesus? The presumption to be drawn from this fact is, that though not recognized or alluded to, as Esseans in the New Testament, they must be recognized or alluded to under some other description.

If we compare what is said of John the Baptist in the four gospels, with the character of the Esseans given by Josephus, we cannot help concluding that he was of their number; and that he was teaching among them, when he came preaching in the wilderness. The Baptist, as a teacher, was not solitary and alone. He attained such high reputation, that he attracted the people from all parts of Judea; and they submitted to

his baptism, believing him to be a prophet, or the Messiah himself. John, therefore, so far from being a lonely hermit, before he could have risen to such pre-eminence, must have belonged to some people of credit and notoriety. The place of his abode, the severity of his manners, the purity of his doctrine, which represented repentance and reformation as the only means of salvation, refer him to the Esseans, who lived not in cities only, but in rural or retired situations, cultivating the ground, and offering to God no other sacrifice than purity of body and of mind.

Epiphanius, whose learning was much more extensive and accurate than is generally imagined, and who never deviates into error, but when he has motives to forsake the truth; asserts that the Esseans were the same people, excepting some trifling difference, with the *Sabuæans.* But these last, as the name imports, were *baptists;* and they still exist under the name of baptists or *Sabians,* professing to believe in John the Baptist as superior to Christ*. Not to mention Epiphanius, whose authority may seem doubtful, Josephus himself represents them as daily practising the rite of baptism. They were then *baptists;* and if so, they had some connec-

* Michael. Introd. Vol. III. p. 285.

tion with John. This argument, I think, is conclusive*.

The Esseans flourished not only in Judea, but in other countries where there were Jews: they abounded particularly in Samaria. For this reason Epiphanius calls them a *Samaritan* sect. In the Recognitions, ascribed to Clement, Simon the Sorcerer is represented as one of the principal among the followers of John the Baptist. The reason of this is now obvious. The Samaritan

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* Quatuor omnino in sectas Samaritani, distributi sunt. ——Quod ad Essenos spectat, ii nulla re prætermissa, primum institutum retinuerunt. Secundum hos Gortheni a se mutuo levibus de causis separati sunt, cum exigua quædam controversia inter ipsos intercessisset, hoc est inter Sabuæos, Essenos et Gorthenos. Epiphan. Vol. I. p. 28. Norberg, a Swedish professor, has given an account of a Jewish sect, still in existence, which profess to believe in John the Baptist. This account has been translated by Michaelis, who observes that *Sabians*, by which they are called, is a Syriac word meaning *baptists;* but it has escaped this and other learned men, that the Sabians who follow John, and the *Sabuæans* of Epiphanius are the same people. According to Josephus, they plunged the whole body in a cold stream when covered in white linen. Εις ἓν αθροιζονται χωριον, ζωσαμενοι τε σκεπασμασι λινοις, ὑυτως απολουονται το σωμα ψυχροις ὑδασι, και μετα ταυτην ἁγνειαν, εις ἰδιον οικημα συνιασιν. J. W. B. II. viii. 5.

sect, called Esseans, of which Simon might be one, professed to be disciples of John.

This conclusion illustrates one remarkable passage in the ministry of Jesus; and in its turn is confirmed by that illustration. To avoid the violence of his enemies, our Lord, we are informed, John x. 41, retired beyond the Jordan, the very place in which the Baptist taught among the Esseans. "Many," adds the Evangelist, "resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracles. But all things that John spoke of this man were true (i. e. have been verified). And many believed on him there." The Evangelist John has not stated the topics of our Lord's discussion, while addressing the Esseans; but Matthew providentially has recorded them. Now as Jesus is known to have selected with peculiar promptitude and propriety, the subjects of his discourse from the objects around him, we may expect, that on this occasion, he should advert to the peculiar notions and practices of the Esseans. And in this expectation, happily, we shall not be disappointed.

From the above account translated from Josephus it appears, that much dispute now obtained among the Esseans respecting the marriage state. Some of them, though they allowed the *lawfulness*, denied in those circumstances, the *expediency*, of marriage; but they insisted on the

unlawfulness of divorce to obtain a second union. The Baptist himself was of the same opinion: and acted on this principle, when reproving Herod. The controversy on that subject was the first question submitted to the decision of Jesus.

"Then the Pharisees came unto him, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he who made them in the beginning, made them male and female. And he said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh: so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Here our Saviour, on the authority of Moses, affirms the legality of marriage in opposition to such of the Esseans as maintained the unlawfulness of that institution.

He next adverts to the abuse of marriage, so general among the Pharisees, and the higher classes of the Jews; and he concurs with the Baptist, in prohibiting a bill of divorcement except in case of fornication, ver. 7—10.

While the Esseans in general cultivated a humble and teachable disposition, some of the leading men among them, distinguished by their rank and attainments, were remarkable for the opposite qualities of pride and arrogance. From

these we shall presently see sprung up in the Christian church, those false teachers known by the name of *Gnostics*, who arrogated this vain title from their supposed superiority in knowledge. This is the next subject which claimed the attention of Jesus: and he adopted the following beautiful incident to sanction the humble docile temper of the meek; and, on the other hand, to beat down the claims of the vain and haughty. "Then little children were brought unto him, that he might put his hands upon them and pray: the disciples rebuked them. Then Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and hinder them not, for such is the kingdom of heaven."

The body of the Esseans, as being Jews and instructed in the law and the prophets, entertained the most honourable notion of God, "regarding him," says Philo, "as the source of every good, and the cause of no evil." But the Samaritan Simon, in connection with some Egyptian impostors, introduced into the school of the Baptist, a diabolical tenet respecting the Creator, representing him as a subordinate deity of an evil nature. Against this growing opinion the following words of Jesus are seemingly levelled. "Behold one came and said unto him, Good master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest

thou me *good? There is none good but one, that is, God.*"

At this time a branch of the Esseans, as we shall presently see, were recluse devotees, who separated from the duties of life, and sought to please God by becoming useless to men. These are the men, whom our Saviour holds forth under the figure of an unprofitable servant, who has concealed his talent in a napkin: and their views of the Creator, as a severe and unjust master, are thus recognized. "We knew thee that thou wert a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed," &c. Mat. xxv.

The Scribes and Pharisees placed the whole of religion in ceremonial observances, and in some supposed privileges, which they enjoyed as the descendants of Abraham. In opposition to this, the Baptist preached repentance and amendment, as the means of avoiding the wrath to come; and taught the Jews to seek the kingdom, by keeping the commandments of God. With this attempt of his forerunner to raise the moral law, and to lower the Levitical code, Jesus strenuously concurred; and he thus finely enforced it, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt

not bear false witness: Honour thy father and thy mother: and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The Esseans held their goods in common; but it will appear probable that they did not yet make this great and unexampled sacrifice to the truth, till their benevolence was refined, and their views enlarged by the example and instruction of Christ. The foundation of this extraordinary conduct was laid by the following admonition; "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast; and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." The surprise and grief, which not only the young man, but his own disciples, shewed on hearing this, suppose that the precept was *new* and *unexpected;* which could not have been the case, had it in any degree been already practised by the disciples of the Baptist.

To this succeeds the parable of the steward, who hired workmen into his vineyard; and the occasion, on which it was delivered, unfolds additional beauty in its structure and application. The Esseans, for the most part, were employed in cultivating the ground, each having a piece of land for himself, or being hired to work on the land of another. And this is the scene whence Jesus, by that correctness of taste and rapidity

of imagination which distinguish all his discourses, selected the exterior of the parable. In a moral sense the Esseans, being a sect of high antiquity, laboured in the divine vineyard, if not from the dawn, yet from an early period, of the Jewish dispensation. But at this time, as I have already observed, many of them were become merely theoretic divines, separated from the active duties of life, and abandoned to that mystic contemplation, which opened a wide door to fanaticism and superstition. These are the men intended by the question, "Why stand ye here all the day *idle?*" This question evidently characterizes some of the Esseans as the idle devotees of contemplation; and Christ intended to correct this growing error, by introducing such as were chargeable with it into the vineyard of God, as active labourers in the service of man.

The disciples of John, who as yet expected him to be the Messiah, conceived themselves, not without reason, as labouring from the beginning in the vineyard of God, and bearing the heat and burden of the day. But our Lord took precedence of his forerunner, and his disciples, who entered comparatively at the eleventh hour, had the lead of those who hitherto followed the Baptist. Thus the last became first, and the

first last. This is the sense which the parable bore in its first application, though it was intended, no doubt, to have a more remote and comprehensive reference to the participation of the Gentiles at large in the privileges of the Jews.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONVERSION OF THE ESSEANS TO CHRISTIANITY.—THEIR CHARACTER DRAWN BY PHILO.

THE repeated and explicit testimony, which the Baptist bore to Jesus as his superior, and the deep impression which that testimony must have had on the Esseans, the love of truth which marked this people, and their profound acquaintance with the sacred writings, must have strongly disposed them to receive our Lord as their expected Messiah. His claims to their regard were such as no honest man in those circumstances could, without violence to his own judgment, well resist. By a voice from heaven he was proclaimed, in the midst of them, as the son of God; and that, in opposition to John, who was confessedly but the messenger or servant of God. The power, wisdom, and goodness, which Jesus, in the course of his ministry, displayed, justified this pre-eminent title; and to crown all, though ignominiously put to death, he rose from the dead, and in triumph ascended to heaven. The Baptist, in consequence of his testimony,

may be considered as the first man who followed Christ; and it was natural for his disciples to imitate his example, and class sooner or later with the converts to Jesus. Accordingly the Evangelist John represents many of the Esseans as believing in Jesus, while for the first time he preached among them. "And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracles; but all things that John spake of this man, were true. *And many believed on him there.*"

It would be a matter of high interest and importance, if we saw transmitted from antiquity, by some competent judge, a full and faithful delineation of the men, who received religious instruction from John and Jesus. Such a delineation would give fresh evidence to the claims of those holy men as divine teachers; and place the influence of the gospel in its proper light, by shewing its happy effects on the lives and conversation of those who received it, while yet *new* and *uncorrupted*. The desideratum thus devoutly to be wished is actually reserved for us by the providence of God. Philo, a Jew of Alexandria, contemporary with Christ and his apostles, and distinguished alike by his rank, talents, eloquence, and virtues, has drawn at length the character of the Esseans after their conversion to christianity, under the name which had ever distinguished them as a body of *holy men*. It is

difficult in a translation to preserve the enthusiasm and energy of his description; but the following version faithfully conveys the meaning of the original.

"Palestine and Syria are not unproductive of honourable and good men; but are occupied by numbers, not inconsiderable, compared even with the very populous nation of the Jews. These, exceeding four thousand, are called ESSEANS, which name, though not, in my opinion, formed by strict analogy, corresponds in Greek to the term HOLY. For they have attained the highest *holiness* in the worship of God, and that not by sacrificing animals, but by cultivating purity of heart. They live principally in villages, and avoid the towns, being sensible that, as disease is generated by corruption, so an indelible impression is produced in the soul by the contagion of society. Some of these men cultivate the ground, others pursue the arts of peace, and such employments as are beneficial to themselves without injury to their neighbours. They seek neither to hoard silver and gold, nor to inherit ample estates, in order to gratify prodigality and avarice, but are content with the mere necessaries of life. They are the only people who, though destitute of money and possessions, and that more from choice than the untowardness of fortune, felicitate themselves as rich, deeming riches to consist, not in ampli-

tude of possessions, but as is really the case, in frugality and contentment. Among them no one can be found who manufactures darts, arrows, swords, corselets, shields, or any other weapon useful in war, nor even such instruments as are easily perverted to evil purposes in times of peace. They decline trade, commerce, and navigation altogether, as incentives to covetousness and luxury; nor have they any slaves among them, but all are free, and all in their turn administer to others. They condemn the owners of slaves as tyrants, who violate the principles of justice and equality, and impiously transgress the dictates of nature, which, like a common parent, has begotten and educated all men alike, and made them brethren, not in name only, but in sincerity and truth; but avarice, conspiring against nature, burst her bonds, having produced alienation for affinity, and hatred in the room of friendship."

"As to learning, they leave that branch of it, which is called *logic*, as not necessary to the acquisition of virtue, to fierce disputants about words; and cultivate natural philosophy only so far as respects the existence of God, and the creation of the universe: other parts of natural knowledge they give up to vain and subtile metaphysicians, as really surpassing the powers of man. But *moral* philosophy they eagerly study, con-

formably to the established laws of their country, the excellence of which the human mind can hardly comprehend without the inspiration of God."

"These laws they study at all times, but more especially on the Sabbath. Regarding the seventh day as holy, they abstain on it from all other works, and assemble in those sacred places which are called *synagogues*, arranging themselves according to their age, the younger below his senior, with a deportment grave, becoming, and attentive. Then one of them, taking the *Bible*, reads a portion of it, the obscure parts of which are explained by another more skilful person. For most of the scriptures they interpret in that symbolical sense, which they have zealously copied from the patriarchs: and the subjects of instruction are piety, holiness, righteousness; domestic and political economy; the knowledge of things really good, bad, and indifferent; what objects ought to be pursued, and what to be avoided. In discussing these topics, the ends which they have in view, and to which they refer as so many rules to guide them, are the love of God, the love of virtue, and the love of man. Of their love to God they give innumerable proofs by leading a life of continued purity, unstained by oaths and falsehoods, by regarding him as the author of every good, and the cause of no evil. They evince their attachment

to virtue, by their freedom from avarice, from ambition, from sensual pleasure; by their temperance and patience; by their frugality, simplicity, and contentment; by their humility, their regard to the laws, and other similar virtues. Their love to man is evinced by their benignity, their equity, and their liberality, of which it is not improper to give a short account, though no language can adequately describe it."

"In the first place, there exists among them no house, however private, which is not open to the reception of all the rest, and not only the members of the same society assemble under the same domestic roof, but even strangers of the same persuasion have free admission to join them. There is but one treasure, whence all derive subsistence; and not only their provisions, but their clothes are common property. Such mode of living under the same roof, and of dieting at the same table, cannot, in fact, be proved to have been adopted by any other description of men. And no wonder, since even the daily labourer keeps not for his own use the produce of his toil, but imparts it to the common stock, and thus furnishes each member with a right to use for himself the profits earned by others."

"The sick are not despised or neglected, because they are no longer capable of useful labour; but they live in ease and affluence, re-

ceiving from the treasury whatever their disorder or their exigencies require. The aged too, among them, are loved, revered, and attended as parents by affectionate children; and a thousand hands and hearts prop their tottering years with comforts of every kind. Such are the champions of virtue, which philosophy, without the parade of Grecian oratory, produces, proposing, as the end of their institutions, the performance of those laudable actions which destroy slavery, and render freedom invincible."

"This effect is evinced by the many powerful men who rise against the Esseans in their own country, in consequence of differing from them in principles and sentiments. Some of these persecutors, being eager to surpass the fierceness of untamed beasts, omit no measure that may gratify their cruelty; and they cease not to sacrifice whole flocks of those within their power; or, like butchers, to tear their limbs in pieces, until themselves are brought to that justice, which superintends the affairs of men. Others of these persecutors cause their snarling fury to assume a different form. Indulging a spirit of unrelenting severity, they address their victims with gentleness, display their intolerant spirit in affected mildness of speech, thus resembling dogs when going to inflict an envenomed wound. By these means, they occasion irremediable evils, and leave

behind them throughout whole communities, monuments of their impiety and hatred to men, in the ever memorable calamities of the sufferers. Yet not one of these furious persecutors, whether open or disguised, have been able to substantiate any accusation against this band of holy men. On the other hand, all men, captivated by their integrity and honour, unite with them as those who truly enjoy the freedom and independence of nature, admiring their communion and liberality which language cannot describe, and which is the surest pledge of a perfect and happy life."

Our author, having thus described the Esseans of Palestine and Syria, proceeds in a subsequent book, to give an account of those who flourished in Egypt, of whom he had a personal knowledge, having been educated for some time in their monasteries.

" Having spoken of the Esseans who, as preferring practice, engage in the duties of life, and who, in all respects, or to use less invidious language, in most respects, surpass other men, I next advance, pursuant to the thread of my subject, to give a description of those who embrace a *contemplative life*. Not suffering the partialities of friendship to exaggerate their virtues, as is the practice with poets and historians, in the absence of fair and honourable deeds, but honestly adhering to the letter of the truth, which the most eloquent

in this instance can hardly hope adequately to delineate. I feel it, however, my duty to attempt the arduous task: for the superior excellence of these men ought not to be a cause of silence with those, who love to speak of what is fair and honourable in conduct."

"The object of these philosophers is manifest from the title which they assume. The men, and even the women, call themselves *Therapeutæ* or *healers*, and this with propriety, either as professing a medical art, superior to that which is practised by men of the world: for the latter profess to heal only the bodies, while the former cure the souls of men, when seized by disorders fierce and scarcely remediable; when occupied by lusts and depraved indulgences; by ignorance, iniquity, and an innumerable multitude of other vices and bad passions; or they so designate themselves as having learnt from nature, and the holy laws of Moses, to worship that Great Being, who in regard to his nature is more simple and undivided than unity, and antecedent to the idea of unity itself."

"The persons who profess this art, embrace it not from education, nor yet merely from the persuasions of others, but are seized by the love of heaven, being filled, like the devotees of Bacchus or Cebele, with enthusiasm to see the supreme object of desire. Thinking themselves already

dead to the world, they desire only a blessed immortal existence. They therefore, from choice, appoint their sons, their daughters, or some other relatives or friends, as their heirs; and while yet living bequeath to them the free possession of their goods. For it behoves those, they think, who are enriched with spiritual wealth to leave for such as are not enlightened the riches of this blind world. Having thus disengaged themselves of the toils of wealth, and having no other snares to entice them, they flee without a look behind, bidding farewel to brothers, sons, parents, and wives; to numerous relations and affectionate companions; to the country in which they were born and educated, and which long familiarity, by the most powerful ties, had endeared to their hearts. But they do not remove to another city, as they seek true freedom, the freedom of the mind; and not like ill-fated slaves, a mere change of masters. For every town, even the best regulated, abounds with commotions, crimes, and disorders, intolerable to him who has once felt the charms of wisdom. They fix their habitations on the outside of cities, in gardens and villages, seeking retirement, not, I conceive, from religious hatred of mankind, but to avoid a pernicious intercourse with those who differ from them in opinions and manners."

"This society now prevails throughout the ha-

bitable globe, the members of it thinking it their duty to share with Greeks and barbarians, the consummate blessing which themselves enjoy. But it has prevailed more particularly in the provinces of Egypt, and about Alexandria. But the most distinguished of the *Therapeutæ* have collected from every quarter in a spot beyond the lake Maria. This they consider as their native place, having preferred it as a situation exceedingly commodious, on account of its security and salubriousness. The houses, in which they assemble, are built in a very humble manner, being intended only for shelter from the inclemencies of heat and cold, and they are placed not contiguous as in towns (for too close a proximity would be disagreeable to men who prefer seclusion), nor yet at so great a distance as to preclude that communion, in which the members delight, or mutual assistance in case of being attacked by thieves."

"In each habitation is a sacred apartment called a *sanctuary* or *monastery*, in which, when alone, they perform the mysteries of a holy life. Into this place they bring neither meat nor drink, nor any article necessary for the body, but only the laws, the divinely inspired oracles of the prophets, the psalms, with such other writings as enlarge their knowledge, and perfect their piety. The idea of God is ever present to their thoughts;

so that their imagination dwells, even in sleep, upon the beauty of his attributes. Many of them, therefore, deliver magnificent visions, suggested by their sacred philosophy in the hours of repose."

"They are accustomed to pray each day in the morning and in the evening, asking, at the rising sun, a blessing on the day, that true blessing, which illumines the mind with heavenly light; and at its setting, that their souls, now exonerated from the load of sensual objects, and encompassed with their own enclosure, as with the silence and solemnity of a sacred court, might investigate the truth. They spend the whole interval, from morning to evening, in religious exercises, reading the holy Scriptures, and unfolding their symbolical meaning, according to that mode of interpretation, which they have derived from their fathers. For the words, they conceive, though expressing a literal sense, convey also a figurative sense, addressed to the understanding. They possess also the commentaries of those sages who, being the founders of the sect, left behind them numerous monuments of the allegorical style. These they use as models of allegory and composition; so that they not only employ themselves in mystic contemplation, but compose, in honour of God, psalms and

hymns, in all the variety of measures which the solemnity of religion admits."

"For six days each man continues in his separate apartment, without passing the threshold or casting a look on things without. On the seventh day, having collected into one assembly, they seat themselves, with a grave deportment, according to their age. Then one of the elders, more skilful than the rest, addresses them with grave looks, and a voice expressive of sedateness, intelligence, and thought; being not desirous to display powers of language, like the orators and sophists of the day, but to express moral truths, thoroughly digested, with a sobriety and accuracy that might not only glide over the ear, but reach the heart, and remain lasting principles of conduct."

"They regard temperance as the foundation on which the other virtues can be raised in the soul. No one eats or drinks until the sun sets; as they think the pursuit of wisdom the only meet employment of the day, and the mere support of the body the suitable work of darkness. Hence they devote to the former all the hours of light, and to the latter but a small portion of the night. Some, in whom the thirst of knowledge predominates, do not, till after three days' abstinence, feel the necessity of support, while a few

so feed on the rich and delicate viands, which wisdom supplies, as to abstain double that time, and then barely taste refreshment, being accustomed, as they say of the grasshopper, to feed on air, whose song, it is presumed, assuages the pain of hunger. Looking upon the Sabbath, in the highest sense a sacred festival, they deem it worthy of extraordinary reverence; in which, after providing for the soul, they alleviate the body, and release withal the beasts of burden from their daily labours. They eat no food more costly than coarse bread, seasoned with salt, to which the more delicate add hyssop in the room of meat; and drink no liquid, but the clear water of the stream. Thus they satisfy hunger and thirst, those imperious appetites to which nature has subjected the race of man, offering them no farther gratification than what is merely necessary to support life. For they eat only so as not to hunger, and drink that they might not be thirsty, avoiding plenitude as prejudicial both to the body and to the mind. Their clothing, like their houses, is mean and simple, as intended only to protect them from the extremes of cold and heat. Their chief object is to practise humility, being convinced, that as falsehood is the root of pride, freedom from pride is the offspring of truth. Falsehood and truth, indeed, they regard as two copious fountains, from the former of which flow

evils of every kind; from the latter emanate all the virtues human and divine *."

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* The book in which Philo treats of the Esseans of Palestine is entitled, Παντα σπουδαιον ειναι ελευθερον, Vol. II. 445. p. 865. That concerning the Esseans of Egypt is called περι βιου θεωρητικου, II. 471. p. 889. This last is particularly noticed by the early fathers. Jerome styles it (lib. de Vir. Illus.) *De vita Nostrorum:* Suidas, περι διαγωγης των Χριστιανων. Fabricius and Mangey say, that Photius did not adopt the common notion of those times, that the *Therapeutæ* were christians: yet his own words, to which they refer, demonstrate the contrary. Ανεγνωσθησαν δε των παρα Ιουδαιοις φιλοσοφησαντων την τε θεωρητικην και πρακτικην φιλοσοφιαν βιοι, ὡν οἱ μεν Εσσηνοι, οἱ δε θεραπευται εκαλουντο, οἱ και μοναστηρια ὡς αυταις λεξεσι λεγει, επεγνυντο, και των μοναζοντων την πολιτειαν προυπεγραφον. Cod. 104. The age and writings of Philo are considered by the learned Fabricius, Bib. Gr. Vol. III. p. 104; and in p. 112. he refers to all those writers, who have treated about the Esseans and the Therapeutæ.

CHAPTER V.

THE ESSEANS PROVED TO BE THE FIRST JEWISH BELIEVERS.

IT is impossible not to be surprised and delighted with the character of the people here delineated; nor can any unprejudiced reader, who reflects that they flourished in Judea and Egypt but a few years after the promulgation of the gospel, help considering them as the first Jewish or Nazarene believers. Of the honour, reflected by these men, the gospel has been violently robbed by the neglect or prejudices of modern days: and it appears to me matter of no small importance, to restore their just claims as the followers of Jesus.

The virtues which the Esseans studied and practised, are the great and peculiar virtues of the gospel. They shine in the character of Christ: the object of his mission was only to enforce and illustrate them; and they are founded on that immortality which he brought to light. These virtues, moreover, form the life and soul of the Christian records; and they widely distinguish the apostles and the churches established by them

from all other bodies of men, whether Jews or Pagans.

It is not to be supposed that the early Christian fathers, to whom the works of Philo were well known, could be ignorant that the Esseans were the same, under a different name, with the Nazarene believers. Accordingly *Eusebius* has not only asserted this fact, but has taken some pains to prove its truth: and his opinion has been followed by Jerome, Epiphanius, and all other ecclesiastical writers down to the days of Zonaras. Yet their opinion has been called in question by modern critics, and Scaliger, Valesius, Basnage, Mangey, and Prideaux*, are

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* "It is true," says this last writer, "Eusebius hath said that these Therapeutæ were christian monks instituted by St. Mark, and so he hath said many other things without judgment or truth." The world will at length be able to see, whether Eusebius or Dean Prideaux speaks without judgment or truth. See Prid. Connec. Vol. II. p. 282.

The catholic writers indiscriminately followed the testimony of Eusebius, hoping thereby to recommend by its high antiquity the establishment of monkery. The protestant authors have, with undistinguishing zeal, ranged on the opposite side, and in endeavouring to oppose the popish writers, have deviated to the opposite extreme of error and temerity. I quote the following passage of Mosheim (Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 45.) as a specimen of the opinions, which learned and liberal divines have long held on this mistaken subject. "The Therapeutæ, of whom Philo the Jew makes par-

among the first who have arraigned the father of ecclesiastical history. The question is considered as long since decided; nor is there, perhaps, a learned man in Europe who does not think the ancient fathers mistaken. The arguments that could produce this settled and uniform conviction must carry apparently unquestionable weight.

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ticular mention in his treatise concerning contemplative life, are supposed to have been a branch of the Essenes. From this notion arose the division of the Essenes into *theoretical* and *practical*. The former of these were wholly devoted to contemplation, and are the same with the Therapeutæ; while the latter employed a part of their time in the performance of the duties of active life. Whether this division be accurate or not, is a matter which I will not take upon me to determine. But I see nothing in the laws or manners of the Therapeutæ, that should lead us to consider them as a branch of the Essenes; nor has Philo, indeed, asserted any such thing. There may have been surely many fanatical tribes among the Jews, besides that of the Essenes; nor should a resemblance of principles always induce us to make a coalition of sects. *It is however certain, that the Therapeutæ were neither Christians nor Egyptians,* as some *have erroneously imagined.* They were undoubtedly Jews; nay, they gloried in that title, and styled themselves, with particular affectation, the true disciples of Moses, though their manner of life was equally repugnant to the institutions of that great lawgiver, and to the dictates of right reason, and shewed them to be a tribe of melancholy and wrong headed enthusiasts.

I shall state these objections in the words of those who make them. First, "One remark alone," says Basnage, "is enough to destroy all those favourable opinions of the Essenes. Philo, from whom these proofs are taken, was born in the year 723 of Rome. He says that he was very young when he wrote his book, and that his studies were afterwards interrupted by being employed in affairs of consequence: and according to this reckoning, Philo must have necessarily written before the birth of Christ." *History of the Jews*, B. II. c. 18. p. 133. On these words Gibbon observes, "Basnage has examined, *with the most critical accuracy*, the curious treatise of Philo, which describes the Therapeutæ. By proving that it was composed as early as the time of Augustus, Basnage has *demonstrated*, in spite of Eusebius (Lib. II. c. 17.) and a crowd of modern catholics, that the Therapeutæ were neither christians nor monks." Decline and Fall, Vol. II. c. 15.

Though this argument is urged by Basnage, and corroborated by Gibbon, with unqualified confidence, it has no foundation whatever in truth, and is refuted by an obvious fact. Caligula, in his second year, began to distress the Jews, and continued to distress them till the end of his reign. Philo published, in two different works, an account of the treatment which the Alexan-

drian Jews received from that ferocious monster: and one fact* is mentioned, by which it shews that, while the events of his narrative happened six or seven years after the resurrection of Jesus, his treatises were not published till after

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* I shall state this fact in the words of the learned *Bryant*. One of the chief enemies of the Jews was an Egyptian named Helicon, who had employed every art to make them odious to the emperor. But, says Philo, Ὁ δε Ελικων ὑπο Κλαυδιου Γερμανικου, Καισαρος, αναιρεθεις, εφ' οις αλλοις ὁ φρενοβλαβης ηδικησεν, αλλα ταυτα μεν ὑστερον εγενετο. De Legatione, Vol. II. p. 576; that is, *This Helicon was at last taken off; being put to death by Claudius Cæsar for some other base actions of which he had been guilty. But these things happened afterwards.* Philo here plainly intimates, that the reign of Claudius was past, when he wrote this document; and Caligula consequently must have been for some years dead. Bryant on Philo Judæus, p. 35. Mangey, the editor of Philo, agrees with Basnage, and gives the following reason for his determination. Ille enim ipse anno Caii quarto urbis conditæ 793 se senem et ætate provectiorem plus una vice testatur. On this Bryant comments in the following manner: "This is a great mistake, into which I wonder how the editor could possibly lapse. Philo, at the beginning of his treatise, where an account is given of his embassy, undoubtedly speaks of himself as old. But by this he meant at the time of his writing, not at the time of his embassy to Caligula, which was probably twenty years or more antecedent. This is manifest to any body who will examine the treatise, and I wonder how it could be mistaken." P. 31.

the reign of Claudius, a period of fourteen or twenty years after the advent of our Lord. The Jews, in spite of the most cruel persecution, adhered to their principles with a firmness that brought upon them the imputation *of obstinacy:* and one leading object, which Philo has in his book concerning the Esseans, is to defend his countrymen for giving up their lives rather than their faith and independence. The cruelties which they endured, the author at the time of his writing expressly calls *ancient injuries* *.

Secondly, it is objected that the Esseans were Christians, because they are not called *Christians:* nor is the least intimation given by Philo and Josephus that they were the disciples of Christ. They could not, I answer, as yet have the christian name, because this name, when Philo wrote, was hardly in existence, or at least it was not known in Egypt as the name of a Jewish sect. The enemies of Christ at Antioch, it appears, first applied this appellation; and assuredly ap-

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* Ταυτα εμηκυνα ουχ ὑπερ του παλαιων απομνημονευειν αδικηματων, &c. "I do not enlarge on these things, in order to recal to mind ancient grievances, but to admire that divine justice which inspects the affairs of men, for appointing the very enemies of Flaccus the instruments of bringing him to condign punishment." P. 986. or Vol. II. 538.

plied it by way of reproach. The faithful believers might well glory in the title of Christians; but they were not so destitute of prudence, as voluntarily to assume a name which was hated and derided by the Jews and Gentiles. Accordingly, they are not commonly called Christians in the New Testament. That denomination occurs but a few times, and that only as the subject of discourse.

Our Lord foresaw that his enemies would attach to his honoured name the bitterest ignominy; and the charge which he gave to his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was the Christ (Matt. xvi. 20.), is thus recorded by Mark, "And he charged them that they should speak to none about him." c. viii. 30. According to this statement, our Lord's meaning may be taken in this manner. "In as much as many will hate me without a cause; do not speak about me before such people. Cherish, indeed, a firm faith in my gospel, and imitate my example; but do not make my name and character the subject of conversation or of dispute in circumstances where no good can be answered, but rather where prejudices will be rivetted, and animosities kindled." Philo, as living in an age and country, where the Jews in general were greatly hated and cruelly persecuted, acted up to the spirit of this advice. He has no where mentioned our Lord by name,

though, as we shall presently see, he frequently speaks of him as the Son of God; and in this he was justified by the authority of Jesus, and by the peculiar difficulties of his situation.

Philo, it is farther to be remarked, does not describe the Esseans as a sect separated from the other Jews by peculiar opinions, or by peculiar modes of worship; but rather holds them up to the world as a body of men, exceeding all others in wisdom and virtue, and by all others to be revered and imitated on that account. In this he has acted agreeably to a maxim, which our Lord has repeatedly enjoined, namely, that those who followed him, should be known *only by their fruit;* and agreeably to his example, in as much as in the beautiful summary of his ministry, the sermon on the mount, he exhibits himself only as a teacher of superior and more refined virtue, unmixed by temporary opinions or local observances. And if it was wise to recommend a religion coming from God only by its happy influence on the hearts and conduct of its professors, in any country, it was wise to do this, as Philo has done in *Egypt,* where the people were devoted beyond all other nations to superstitious rites, and contaminated by immoral indulgences.

The third objection is, that Philo represents the Esseans as using commentaries which were

ancient *, while the christian scriptures were quite recent, nor yet all extant. These commentaries were composed by the founders of the sect, who must therefore long have preceded the founders of christianity. But this is an error founded on the prejudices of modern education. Being in the habit of distinguishing between Jews and Christians, we take it for granted that christianity is a religion distinct from judaism. The fact, however, is much otherwise. Christianity is but another name for judaism, interpreted in the manner done by Christ and his apostles. The distinguishing doctrines of the gospel are the advent, the death, the resurrection of Christ, his coming again to raise the dead, and to judge the world: and these doctrines are not only contained in the Jewish scriptures, but are profes-

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* The words of Philo are, Εσι δε αυτοις συγγραμματα παλαιων ανδρων, οι της αιρησεως αρχηγεται γενομενοι πολλα μνημεια της αλληγορουμενης ιδεας απελιπον. P. 893. Vol. II. 475. From these words Prideaux thus argues, "They manifestly prove that the Therapeutæ could not be Christians; for they were a sect of long standing in Egypt, and tell us that they had hymns and writings among them of ancient date, composed in times of old by such as were principal leaders of their sect. But how could they be said to have hymns and writings composed by ancient leaders of their sect, when the sect itself was not above ten, or twenty, or at most forty years standing?" P. 282, 283.

sedly taught from those scriptures by our Lord and his apostles. His advice to those, who resisted his claims, was, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." John v. 39. When he endeavoured to withdraw the attention of the Jews from the rites, to the spirit, of the law, they were ready to charge him with violating the religion of Moses. His answer was, "Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil:" which means, "Suspect me not to be guilty of innovation; I am come not to introduce a *new* religion, but to reform and perfect the *old*." To the same purpose is the language of St. Paul, when branded as a *heretic*, If I am a heretic, I teach the heresy of Moses and the prophets.—"Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, *saying none other things*, than those which Moses and the prophets did say should come. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Acts xxvi.

But let us hear what Philo says of the Esseans in regard to this subject. "The interpretation of the sacred writings is made by them in an im-

plied allegorical sense: for the whole law, in the opinion of these men, resembles *a living being;* the express literal signification constitutes the body, while the implied spiritual sense forms the soul, of these scriptures *" An observation more happy, and more important, as illustrative of many passages in the New Testament, cannot well be conceived. It presents us, in one concise view, with the nature and grounds of the dispute between the advocates of the gospel and their opponents among the Jews. The latter, taking the words of the prophets in a literal sense, expected a temporal king; and confining their attention to the letter of the law, considered it only as a system of external ordinances. But the former, overlooking the literal and primary signification, like the body or flesh, as of inferior importance, rested on the spiritual meaning, as the soul, the essential part of Moses and the prophets. Hence, while the Scribes and Pharisees degraded

* Nam hi viri totam legem existimant habere animalis similitudinem, cujus præcepta ad literam accepta corpus referunt; animam vero sententiæ reconditæ sub velamine verborum abditæ; in quibus rationalis anima egregie seipsam contemplatur, tamquam in speculo, sub his ipsis verbis miram sententiarum pulchritudinem conspiciens; et figuras quidem mysticas explicans et detergens, sensus vero interiores nudos in lucem edens, talibus qui ex parva suggestione sciunt obscura ex apertis colligere. P. 901. Vol. II. 483.

the religion of their fathers below its natural standard, Christ and his followers regarded it as a divine institution, addressing its exterior only to the infancy of reason, but expanding from sense to intellection, with the progress of society, till the period was ripe for the promised Messiah. In the fulness of time the Messiah came, rising like the sun, with all the majesty and mildness of truth. Supported by the power and illumined by the wisdom of God, he drew aside the veil of sense; the twilight of rites and symbols disappeared, and the gospel, with life and immortality, emerged into a bright and eternal day.

Now, this being the case, if the Jewish believers, with Paul and Philo in the number, were asked, Who were the founders of their sect? they would, without hesitation, answer, "THE PATRIARCHS.—The main stem, they would add, is Abraham; from him we should be cut off, if we did not believe in Jesus. Those of the house of Israel who reject him, are now withered branches fit only for fuel. These branches being broken off, the believing Gentiles, being a wild olive, are grafted in among us, and with us partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree." Rom. xi. 17.

It is not to be conceived, that the faithful among the Jews would allow Jesus, who only completed, to be the *founder* of their faith, if they

could with justice boast of the venerable authority of their most ancient forefathers. This would be at once to deviate from the truth, contrary to their strongest predilections, as the children of Abraham and the disciples of Moses, and at the same time weakly to expose the gospel to the charge of being a *late* and *recent* religion. Philo and Josephus, by describing the Jewish believers as a sect of Jews of high antiquity, wisely precluded, on one hand, the odium attached to the partial names of *Nazarenes*, *Galileans*, or *Christians*; and on the other, the charge of being *new* and unreasonable, which was soon urged against christianity *.

Prone as the Jews, in the early ages of their history, were to idolatry, there were many who zealously maintained the worship of the true God. Those, who resembled one another by their pe-

* Nothing was more general and common than this objection against the christian doctrine; and it was an objection which applied with greater force at the first promulgation of the gospel, than in subsequent times. Eusebius, towards the beginning of his Ecclesiastical History, has, in opposition to it, endeavoured to prove the antiquity of the christian faith. Justin Martyr, in his greater apology, glances at the same charge; and in reference to it, delivers this candid remark. "All those, who lead a rational life, though deemed atheists, are *christians;* such as Socrates and Heraclitus among the Greeks; Abraham, Elias, and others, among the barbarians." Apolog. I. sec. 61.

culiar attachment to the religion of their fathers, would naturally unite in times of general degeneracy, and form themselves into a distinct body or community, studying the law, and displaying the happy influence of it in their lives and conversations. A body of this sort is mentioned in the Maccabees. "There came to Mattathias a *company of Assideans*, who were mighty men of Israel, even all such as were voluntarily devoted to the law." 1 Mac. ii. 42. To this company Philo probably alludes, where he calls the Esseans a *band of holy men**."

And Josephus, in writing of the Assideans, (Antiq. Jud. Lib. XII. 10. 3.) calls them *good and holy men*. In this he followed the book of the Maccabees, one passage of which renders the Hebrew of *assideans* by the Greek hosioi (ὅσιοι) as being derived from it. Philo has followed this version, probably on the authority of some among the people he was de-

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* Ασιδαιοι is the Hebrew חסך *khasid* in Greek characters. The words used by Philo are, Τον λεχθεντα ὁμιλον των Εσσαιων η ὁσιων. The terms ὁσιος and ἁγιος, are nearly of the same import: and it is remarkable that, under the latter of these, the apostles have usually addressed the christian churches founded by them: and this is no inconsiderable argument, that the people whom Paul addresses, and of whom Philo speaks, were really the same.

scribing. Hence he justly intimates that the name in Greek did not strictly correspond to the sense of the original in Hebrew. For *Hasid* denotes *merciful, benign, good,* and by consequence only it came to signify *holy.* Hence we may infer, that *Assideans, Hosii, Esseans,* are names of the same import, which had long been applied by the Jews to such among them, as were distinguished by their skill in interpreting, and zeal in adhering to the law of Moses.

This circumstance might lead one to conclude, that the *Hosii* or *Esseans* formed the same class of men, continued through successive ages, with the *sons of the prophets,* mentioned in the book of Kings, of whom Elijah was one. This accounts for the extraordinary reverence which the Esseans paid to the prophets, and for the striking resemblance which subsisted between them in purity of character and mode of living*. John the Baptist, it appears probable, rose in this line,

* " These had their habitation chiefly in the country: they lived in a kind of society among themselves, and had generally one or more of the prophets to be the head over them, and to whom they gave the title of *father.* Their houses were but mean, and of their own building. Their food was chiefly pottage made of herbs; unless when the people sent some better fare to them, such as bread, parched corn, honey, dried fruits, and the like. Their dress was plain and coarse, and tied about with a leathern girdle:

and he was so like *Elias* in virtue and office, that he often went by that name. Hence the justness of the conclusion already made, that John was one of the Esseans, and preached at the head of that sect when our Lord made his appearance. The Jews sojourned in the wilderness forty years, receiving the law from God, and supported by his special providence. Being thus, as it were, religiously educated, they received in every place, and in every age, an early bias for such a mode of living, and such places of abode. In retired situations, the more studious could meditate on the divine law, and the more virtuous maintain the simplicity of nature uncorrupted by the luxury and vices of cities and large communities. In this class were the sons of the prophets, who, as they arose in succession from Noah to John the Baptist*, formed an order of men distinguished

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their wants being so few, were easily supplied by their own hands; and as their views reached no farther, so they limited their labour to that, that they might bestow the more time in prayer, study, and retirement. Riches were no temptation to them in such a state; and therefore Elisha not only refused Naaman's presents, but punished *Gehazi* in a severe manner, for having clandestinely obtained a small portion of them." Ancient Hist. Vol. III. 234.

* This view of the Esseans will account for what the Second Pliny in his Natural History (Lib. V. 15.) has thought fit to say of them, his object being to say something that might excite wonder and ridicule. "Ab occidente litora

not as a distinct religious sect, but by their superior knowledge of the scriptures, by greater purity of manners, and a more ardent zeal in the service of God. Jesus and his disciples, by submitting to the baptism of John, became *Esseans;* and the Esseans, comprehending the school of the prophets, became in their turn the leading members in the church of Christ. Thus it came to pass, that the Esseans are no where mentioned in the New Testament. The writers of the Christian Scriptures were themselves of the number, and could not therefore speak of them, but under those names, by which they spoke of themselves.

Thus, the very objections which learned men have urged to shew that the Esseans were not Christians, prove them to be the followers of Christ. I now proceed to offer a few remarks on the account given by Philo, which will render the fact never again liable to be called in question.

1. The historian says, that the Esseans wor-

Esseni fugiunt, usquequa nocent: gens sola, et in toto orbe præter cæteras mira, sine ulla femina, omni venere abdicata, sine pecunia, socia palmarum. In diem ex æquo convenarum turba renascitur, large frequentantibus, quos vitæ fessos ad mores eorum fortunæ fluctus agitat. Ita per seculorum millia (incredibile dictu) gens æterna, in qua nemo nascitur. Tam fæcunda illis aliorum vitæ pœnitentia est."

shipped God, as their name imports, with peculiar *holiness;* and that not by sacrificing animals, but by cultivating purity of heart *. Now, this is the very feature which distinguished the gos-

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* Λεγονται τινες παρ αυτοις ονομα Εσσαιοι, πληθος ὑπερ τετρακισχιλιους παρωνυμοι ὁσιοτητος, επειδη καν τοις μαλιστα θεραπευται θεου γεγονασι, ου ζωα, καταθυοντες, αλλ' ἱεροπρεπεις τας ἑαυτων διανοιας κατασκευαζειν αξιουντες. P. 876. Vol. II. 457. This is precisely the import of the language used by St. Paul, Rom. xii. 1. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, *to offer yourselves* a living sacrifice, holy well pleasing to God, the service which you deem rational." Here the epithet *living* has a tacit reference to the victims or *dead* sacrifice, which the rest of the Jews offered to God, and with this the writer farther contrasts the sacrifice of themselves, which the Esseans or Christians offered as a service more rational in itself, and more acceptable to God. Josephus uses similar words, though misrepresented in the Latin version. Εις δε το ἱερον αναθηματα στελλοντες, θυσιας ουκ επιτελουσι διαφοροτητι ἁγνειων——εφ ἁυτων τας θυσιας επιτελουντες. *Though they send gifts to the temple, they do not sacrifice victims, having adopted a different mode of purification, being themselves the victims which they offer up.* A. J. lib. 18. c. 1. 5. It is worthy of remarking in this place, that Philo and Josephus limit the Esseans to about *four thousand* and upwards. But it appears from the whole of their narratives, that these people were far more numerous, and therefore our authors could mean by this number, only such as distinguished themselves by their rank, zeal, and learning, in

pel from judaism, as understood in those days. The ideas entertained by the vulgar, and even by the learned, were diametrically opposite to those of our Lord, in regard to the most acceptable mode of worshipping God. The former not only laid great stress upon sacrifices and rites, as indispensable and immutable parts of the religion of Moses; but they went farther, and made the religion of Moses altogether to consist in them. On the contrary the Christians aimed at repealing the Levitical code, and at substituting in its room well regulated affections, inward purity, and moral rectitude of disposition, as the true ground, on the part of the worshipper, of acceptance with God. When therefore Jesus, in opposition to ritual pretenders, represented the law and the prophets as comprehended in the maxim of doing to others, what-

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supporting and promoting the sect. The words of Philo, make it farther manifest, that *all* the people, whom he was going to describe, did not go by the name of Esseans: for, he says, *some of them are called Esseans.* Both these writers were desirous to extend to all the christian Jews the credit and fair name, which had long been conceded to the Esseans, and which they particularly merited under John the Baptist. And they thought it more prudent, and less likely to create alarm, to give the number of the Esseans at the commencement, than in their subsequent expanded state, after the prevalence of the gospel.

ever, under a change of circumstance, we should wish them to do for us; when he proclaimed that God was a spirit, and that the hour was coming, when the true worshippers should worship him in spirit and in truth, they accused him of destroying the law and annulling the prophets, and under this charge they virtually put him to death. The opposite spirit of the ritual and spiritual systems, is still more evident from the preaching of the apostles. Stephen was accused of speaking blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. The judaizing zealots persecuted St. Paul for the same reason. Even the Jews, who believed, were all zealous of the law. Acts xxi. 20. This fact proves with absolute certainty, that the notion of worshipping God with acceptance, not by ritual observances, but by purity of heart, was at this time *new* among the Jews, and consequently that the holy men, who, according to Philo, substituted the latter in the room of the former, could be no other than disciples of Jesus.

2. It is not to be supposed that any considerable body of men among the Jews, in the time of our Lord, and afterwards, could have been objects of violent persecution, but the Christians. The sufferings of these are too well known to require proof or illustration. Soon after the head of this party had been ignominiously put to death,

havock was made of his church, then in its infancy: men and even women were haled and committed to prison, the rulers and other leading men being the instigators of such measures: and they are the measures which Philo has in view, when he thus writes. "Many powerful men rise against the Esseans, in consequence of differing from them. Some of these being eager to surpass the untameable fierceness of beasts, omit nothing that may gratify their cruelty; and they cease not to sacrifice whole flocks of those within their power; or, like butchers, to tear their limbs in pieces, till themselves are brought to that justice which superintends the affairs of men*." The apostle Paul asserts the same fact in nearly the same language. "We are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Rom. viii. 36. And under what pretence were these cruelties committed? "Yet," says

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* Πολλων κατα καιρους επαναστντων τη χωρα δυνατων, και φυσεσι και προαιρεσεσι χρησαμενων διαφερουσαις· οι μεν γαρ προς το ατιθασσον αγριοτητα θηριων εκνικησαι σπουδασαντες, ουδεν παραλιποντες των εις ωμοτητα, τους υπηκοους αγεληδον ιερευοντες, η και ζωντας ετι μαγειρων τροπον κατα μερη και μελη κρεουργουντες, αχρι του τας αυτας υπομειναι συμφορας υπο της τα ανθρωπεια εφορωσης δικης, ουκ επαυσαντο. Vol. II. p. 459.

Philo, "their furious persecutors have not been able to accuse, in any one instance, this band of holy men." And the conviction of this fact induced St. Paul triumphantly to put the question, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's chosen people?" But had such violence any effect in suppressing their zeal or diminishing their numbers? "On the contrary," says their indignant apologist, "all men, captivated by their integrity and honour, unite with them, as with men, who enjoy the true freedom and independence of nature, admiring their communion and liberality, which language cannot describe, and which is the surest pledge of a perfect and happy life." To the same effect adds our apostle, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The enemies of the gospel, being unable successfully to oppose it by open violence, had recourse to artful means. Hoping to ensnare or betray its professors, they sometimes affected to embrace the new faith, and to become the friends of those who supported it. Their secret plots against Jesus, as is evident from many

parts of his history, suppose them capable of such treachery in regard to his disciples. From experience, and the caution he gave them, the believers learnt wisdom, and they appear to have received with suspicion, every convert from among the Pharisees who had distinguished himself as their enemy. Of this we have a striking example in the case of Saul, "Who tried to join himself to the disciples: but they were afraid of him, not believing him to be a disciple." Acts ix. 26. To this singular circumstance Philo appears to allude in the following words: "Others (of these persecutors) cause their snarling fury to assume a different form. Indulging a spirit of unrelenting severity, they address their victims with gentleness, display their intolerant spirit in affected mildness of speech, resembling those dogs which fawn, when going to inflict an envenomed wound*."

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* Οἱ δε το παρακεκινημενον και λελυτηκος εις ετερον ειδος κακιας μεθαρμοσαμενοι, πικριαν αλεκτον επιτηδευσαντες, ἡσυχη λαλουντες ηρεμαιωτερης φωνης ὑποκρισει βαρυμηνι ηθος δεικνυμενοι, κυνων ιοβολων τροπον προσσαινοντες ανιατων γενομενοι κακων αιτιοι, κατα πολεις μνημεια της αὐτων ασεβειας και μισανθρωπιας απελιπον, τας των πεπονθοτων αληθους συμφορας. αλλα γαρ ουδεις ουδε των σφοδρα ωμοθυμων, ουδε των παυ δολερων και ὑπουλων, ισχυσε

3. The following is another characteristic circumstance of the first Jewish believers. "And all that believed were together, and had all things common. And sold their possessions, and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need." Acts ii. 44. "The evidence," says Philo, "of their love to man, consists in their benignity, their equity, and their liberality, which no language can adequately describe. There is but one treasure, whence they all derive support; and not only their provisions, but their clothes are common property. Such mode of living under the same roof, and of dieting on the same table, cannot in fact be proved to have been adopted by any other description of men*."

τον λεχθεντα ὁμιλον των Εσσαιων η ὁσιων αιτιασασθαι. παντες δε ασθενες-εροι της καλοκαγαθιας γενομενοι, καθαπερ αυτονομοις και ελευθεροις ουσιν εκ φυσεως προσηνεχθησαν, ἀδοντες αυτων τα συσιτια, και την παντος λογου κρειττονα κοινωνιαν, ἡ βιου τελειου και σφοδρα ευδαιμονος εξι σαφεσατον δειγμα.

* Το γαρ ὁμωροφιον, η ὁμοδιαιτον, η ομοτραπεζον ουκ αν τις ευροι παρ' ἑτεροις εργω βεβαιουμενον. Josephus also meets the attempt made by the enemies of the gospel to diminish in this respect the merits of its first professors, by saying that no such communion ever existed among any of the Greeks. Αξιον δε αυτων θαυμασαι παρα παντας τους ἀρετης μεταποιουμενους το δικαιον μηδαμως ὑπαρξαν

From these last words, compared with another passage of the same writer, it clearly appears, that at this very early period attempts were made by the enemies of the gospel to diminish the cre-

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Ελληνων η Βαρβαρων τισιν, αλλα μηδε εις ολιγον. *It is fit to admire those men beyond all others who profess virtue, for their liberality, nothing like to which was ever practised by any of the Greeks or Barbarians, not even for the shortest period.* This testimony of Philo and Josephus is worthy of notice, as it sets aside a subsequent attempt of Porphyry and Iamblicus, who, to undermine the unrivalled excellence of the the first believers, ascribe the same liberality to Pythagoras and his followers in Italy. The latter of these says of Pythagoras that, on coming to Italy above two thousand became converts to his doctrine, the first time he addressed the people. Πλειονες η δισχιλιοι τοις λογοις ενεσχηθησαν. αλλα ὁμου συν παισι και γυναιξιν ὁμακοειον παμμεγεθες ἱδρυσαμενοι και πολισαντες αυτοις την προς παντων επικληθεισαν μεγαλην Ελλαδα, νομους τε παρ' αυτου δεξαμενοι και προσταγματα, ὡσανει θειας ὑποθηκας, ὡν εκτος ουδεν επραττον. παρεμειναν ὁμονοουντες ὁλῳ των ὁμιλητων αθροισματι, ευφημουμενοι, και παρα των περιξ μακαριζομενοι, τας τε ουσιας κοινας εθεντο. De Vitæ Pyth. c. 6. p. 22. that is, *More than two thousand, in his first public discourse, were arrested by his doctrine, who, together with their wives and children, forming an immense auditory, and having founded the community called* GRÆCIA MAGNA, *received from him (viz. Pythagoras) laws and ordinances, which they regarded as maxims of divine authority, and which in no instance they transgressed, but which the whole assembly with one accord*

dit due to the liberality of the first Christians, by opposing to them some among the pagans, who shewed equal generosity and contempt of wealth in more early times. Anaxagoras and Democritus appear to have been cited with this view. But Philo observes, that their case was by no means similar to that of the Esseans: the former, through neglect, having left their estates to be the prey of thieves or of wild beasts; whereas the latter did not despise their possessions, but from their predominant love of man, distributed them among the sick, the aged, and the needy*. This remark of Philo is important in many re-

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obeyed; being admired and proclaimed blessed by all around. They had their goods in common. The whole of this, I am free to say, is a barefaced fiction, unknown even in the days of Philo and Josephus, invented by this writer, and others like him, in order to check the progress of christianity. They could not deny the great events recorded in the gospel: they had therefore no other alternative, but to invent things similar to them, and ascribe them to Pythagoras, the distance of whose age rendered it difficult to contradict them with effect. The very existence of works which were thus intended to undermine christianity, will be found, when duly examined, a noble monument of its truth.

* Δημοκριτον και Αναξαγοραν Ελληνες αδουσιν, ότι φιλοσοφιας ίμερῳ πληχθεντες, μηλοβοτους ειασιν γενεσθαι τας ουσιας. Αγαμαι τους ανδρας και αυτος γενομενους χρηματων κρειττους· αλλα ποσῳ βελτιονες, οἱ μη θρεμ-

spects, and especially as it decides the question before us. We have authentic evidence, that the first Christians in Palestine maintained a community of Gods; our author is also express in stating that the Esseans of Palestine did thus hold their goods in common, and that no other description of men shewed similar communion and liberality. The conclusion to be drawn then is, that the Christians of Palestine, and the Esseans of Palestine, were the same people.

The powerful principle which prompted the Esseans to part with their possessions, is thus stated by our Lord himself. "Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all and followed thee. And Jesus answered, and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; *and in the world to come eternal life.*" Mark x. 28. Philo assigns the same principle as the ground of their conduct, "Thinking themselves already dead to the world, they desire

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μασιν εμβοσκεσθαι τας κτησεις ανεντες, αλλα τας ανθρωπων ενδειας συγγενων η φιλων, επανορθωσαμενοι, και εξ απορων ευπορους αποφηναντες. P. 473.

only a blessed immortal existence. They therefore, of their own accord, appoint their sons, their daughters, or some other relatives or friends, as their heirs; and while yet living bequeath to them the free enjoyment of their goods. For it behoves those, they think, who are enriched with spiritual wealth, to leave for such as are not thus enlightened, the riches of this blind world. Having thus disengaged themselves of the toils of wealth, and having no other allurements to ensnare them, they flee without a look behind, bidding farewel to brothers, sons, parents, and wives; to numerous relations and affectionate companions, to the country in which they were born and educated, and which long familiarity had by the most powerful ties endeared to their hearts*."

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* Ειτα δια τον της αθανατου και μακαριας ζωης ἱμερον τετελευκεναι ηδη τον θνητον βιον, απολειπουσι τας ουσιας υἱοις, η θυγατρασιν, ειτε και αλλοις συγγενεσιν, ἑκουσιῳ γνωμῃ προσκληρονομουμενοι· εδει γαρ τους τον βλεποντα πλουτον εξ ἑτοιμου λαβοντες τον τυφλον παραχωρησαι τοις ετι τας διανοιας τυφλωττουσι (compare this language with Rom. xv. 27.)——ὁταν ουν εκςωσι των ουσιων, ὑπ' ουδενος ετι δελεαζομενοι, φευγουσι αμεταςρεπτι· καταλιποντες αδελφους, τεκνα, γυναικας γονεις πολυανθρωπους συγγενειας, φιλικας ἑταιρειας, τας πατριδας, εν αἱς εγεννηθησαν, και ετραφησαν· επειδη το συνηθες ὁλκον και δελεασαι δυνατωτατον. 473. 474.

4. It is said of Socrates, that he endeavoured to turn philosophy from the study of nature to speculations upon life. Jesus Christ merits this praise in a far higher degree. While he was a philosopher, in the most important sense, he professed not to enlarge our knowledge in any department of science, nor to unfold the true systems of matter and of mind. These systems he left to be discussed, and to be ascertained, by the efforts of unaided reason. His object was to establish a divine philosophy, calculated to heal the disorders of sin, and to prepare mankind, by a right use of the present, for a higher and a better world. The hope of a future state he has laid upon the surest foundation, namely, the power and wisdom of God, evinced in his miracles and resurrection; and by his precepts and example he has inculcated rational piety, habitual benevolence, and inward purity, as duties absolutely necessary to ensure eternal bliss. As his doctrine is not the fruit of unassisted reason, though consonant to the most enlightened reason, he sought not to recommend it by the aid of learning. Having not studied in the school, he rejected wisdom of the world: and choosing, as his immediate associates and agents, men in perfect unison with his own views and character, he exhorted them to depend for success in his service, more upon the ardour of their zeal, the efficacy

of their example, the splendid nature of the truths which they taught, and the extraordinary interposition of heaven, than upon any advantage they could derive from rank or fortune, knowledge or eloquence. Thus instructed, though they preached a doctrine, which at first was unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness, they in the end destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nothing the understanding of the prudent. And he, who had no small claims to wisdom and eloquence, is known to have said, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; And my speech, and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Cor. ii. 1. Conformable to the spirit of these remarks, is the following language of Philo. "As to learning, the Esseans leave that branch of it, which is called *logic*, as not necessary to the acquisition of virtue, to fierce disputants about words. And they cultivate natural philosophy only so far as respects the existence of God, and

the creation of the universe. Other parts of natural philosophy, they give up to vain and subtle metaphysicians, as really surpassing the human powers. But *moral* philosophy they eagerly study, conformably to the institutions of their country, the excellence of which can hardly be comprehended without the inspiration of God.—Such," adds he, "are the champions of virtue, whose philosophy, without the parade of Grecian oratory, produces, proposing as the end of their ordinances the performance of those laudable actions, which destroys slavery and renders freedom invincible*."

5. The early fathers, in various parts of their writings, insist on the happy influence of the gospel, as a decisive proof of its divine origin: nor

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* Φιλοσοφιας τε, το μεν λογικον, ὡς ουχ αναγκαιον εις κτησιν αρετης λογοθηραις, το δε φυσικον, ὡς μειζον η κατ' ανθρωπινην φυσιν, μετεωρολεσχαις απολιποντες, πλην ὁσον αυτου περι ὑπαρχεως Θεου και της του παντος γενεσεως φιλοσοφειται· το ηθικον ευ μαλα διαπονουσιν, αλειπταις χρωμενοι τοις πατριοις νομοις, ὁυς αμηχανον ανθρωπινην επινοησαι ψυχην ανευ κατακωχης ἐνθεου——Τοιουτους ἡ διχα περιεργιας Ελληνικων ονοματων αθλητας αρετης απεργαζεται φιλοσοφια γυμνασματα προτιθεισα τας επαινετας πραξεις, εξ ὡν ἡ αδουλωτος ελευθερια βεβαιουται. Vol. II. 458.

is there a topic, on which they dwell with such frequent and energetic eloquence, as when they describe its mighty power in reforming the world. The following passage of Lactantius, though carrying the appearance of declamation, yet contains the words of truth and soberness. "The mighty energy of the divine precepts on the minds of men is demonstrated by daily experience; give me a man that is irascible, reproachful, or impetuous, and by a few words of God I will restore him mild as a lamb; give me a man that is covetous, and tenacious of his property, and I will give him back to you liberal, and distributing his money with full hands; give me a man fearful of pain and of death, and he will despise crucifixions, and flames, and tortures; give me a man that is lustful, an adulterer, and a gambler, and you will presently see him sober, chaste, and temperate; give me a man that is cruel and thirsty for blood, and his fury will be soon changed into real clemency; give to God a man that is unjust, foolish, or an offender, and immediately he will become equitable, prudent, and inoffensive. For by this purification alone all his wickedness will be washed away."

Philo, as living in Egypt, must have witnessed the debased state of the inhabitants, and the happy change which christianity, on its first promulgation, produced on the manners of those

who embraced it in that country. He therefore was a competent judge of the necessity of a divine revelation to destroy the vices and superstitions of the heathen world, and of the tendency and sufficiency of the gospel, while yet uncorrupted to answer this end. Accordingly he bears this eloquent and emphatic testimony to the saving influence of those who taught it. "They call themselves healers, and this with propriety, as professing a medical art, superior to that which is practised by men of the world: for the latter profess to heal only the bodies, while the former cure the souls, of men, when seized by disorders fierce, and scarcely remediable, when occupied by lusts and depraved indulgences, by ignorance, iniquity, and an innumerable multitude of other vices and bad passions *." We should hardly need any other passage than this to prove, that

* Η δε προαιρεσις των φιλοσοφων ευθυς εμφαινεται δια της προσρησεως, Θεραπευται γαρ και Θεραπευτριδες ετυμως καλουνται· ητοι παρ' οσον ιατρικην επαγγελλονται κρεισσονα της κατα πολεις, ἡ μεν γαρ σωματα Θεραπευει μονον, εκεινη δε και ψυχας νοσοις κεκρατημενας χαλεπαις και δυσιαταις, ας κατεσκεψαν ηδοναι τε και επιθυμιαι και λυπαι και φοβοι πλεονεξιαι τε και αφροσυναι, και αδικιαι και το των αλλων παθων και κακιων ανηνυτον πληθος.

by these healers, Philo meant the great physician of souls and his followers, unless indeed we could be so absurd as to suppose that some other doctrine, distinct from the gospel, prevailed at the same time, equally remediable, equally powerful, in purifying the vices of mankind.

6. If our author published his account of the Esseans so late as twenty years after the resurrection of Jesus, and it could not well be later, the power of the gospel, in subduing the minds of men, and the zeal of its advocates in preaching it, must have been surprising to justify the following explicit testimony. "This society now prevails throughout the habitable globe, the members thinking it their duty to share with Greeks and with Barbarians, the consummate blessing which themselves enjoy*." The apostles received the solemn command to go and baptize all nations. In a few years, they executed, to a great extent, this apparently impossible commission. To a person who is acquainted with the real state of the heathen world, their success in so short a period, must appear truly wonderful, even supposing, as one of the Evangelists states, "that

* Πολλαχου μεν ουν της οικουμενης εστι τουτο το γενος· εδει γαρ αγαθου τελειου μετασχειν και την Ελλαδα και την Βαρβαρον. P. 474.

the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word with signs following," and utterly impossible without that supposition. "Destitute of all advantages, protected by no authority, assisted by no art, not recommended by the reputation of its author, nor enforced by eloquence in its advocates, *the word of God grew mightily and prevailed.* Twelve men, poor and artless, and illiterate, triumphed over the fiercest and most determined opposition; over the tyranny of the magistrate and the subtleties of the philosopher; over the prejudices of the Gentile and the bigotry of the Jew. They established a religion which preached doctrines, pure and spiritual, such as corrupt nature was prone to oppose, because it shrunk from the severity of their discipline; which required its followers to renounce almost every opinion they had embraced as sacred, and every interest they had pursued as important; which even exposed them to every species of danger and infamy; to persecution unmerited and unpitied; to the gloom of a prison, and to the pangs of death. Hopeless as this prospect might appear, to the view of short-sighted man, the gospel yet emerged from the obscurity, in which it was likely to be overwhelmed, by the complicated distresses of its friends, and the unrelenting cruelties of its foes. It succeeded in a peculiar degree, and in a peculiar manner; it derived that success

from truth, and obtained it under circumstances where falsehood must have been detected and crushed *." *White's Sermons*, p. 142.

The following passage of Philo, on the same subject, is here worthy of being quoted, " The children of wisdom resemble the sand; because

* The dispute about the Esseans is one of those subjects, which the protestant writers have warmly controverted with the catholics; and undoubtedly it is a subject, in the discussion of which, they appear to great disadvantage. Scaliger, Basnage, Prideaux, Mosheim, and even the candid and cautious Lardner, have all concurred, in direct opposition to the faith of history, in vilifying this injured people, in order to deny their claims as the followers of Jesus. I shall here subjoin what the last of these writers has said in regard to the Esseans; and the reader, in perusing his words, will be apt to feel emotions of a different kind from that respect usually commanded by this great and good man. " As for the Essenes," says he, " not being mentioned by the Evangelists, it was not their design to write the history of the Jewish sects, but of our Saviour's ministry. And it is likely this did not lead them to take any particular notice of them. They were not very numerous. Josephus computes their number at about four thousand; but I think he means only those of them that entirely rejected marriage. Philo says, that in Syria and Palestine there were about four thousand of them. As they were not very numerous, so they lived very retired. Philo says, they sacrificed no living creatures, and that they shunned cities. Josephus says, they sent presents to the temple, but offered no sacrifice there. They seem not, therefore, to have come much abroad; and they would not admit a man of another sect into the apartments in

the sand is uncircumscribed in number; and because, as the sand which lines the shore, repels the incursions of the sea; so the divine word of instruction does the sins of men. This word (namely the gospel), according to the promises of God, spreads to every corner of the universe, and renders him who receives it, the heir of all things, extending in every way to the east, and to the west, to the north, and to the south. For it is written, *It shall expand to the sea, to the south, to the north, and to the east.* (Gen. xxviii. 14.) A good man is not a blessing only to himself, but the common benefit of all other men; as he readily communicates to all others the advantages which he himself enjoys. For as the sun is a light to all those who have eyes, so the divinely wise are the light of all rational beings. For in thee, says the scripture, shall all the tribes of men be blessed. If any one therefore in a house, or a city,

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which they lived. In order to be admitted among them, a year's probation was required without doors, that it might be seen whether a person could bear their way of life.——Is it any wonder that the Evangelists had no particular occasion to mention this private set of men in writing the life of our Saviour? *These men would not come to him, and it would have been a disparagement to him to have gone to them. It is, I think, a just observation of Dr. Prideaux, that almost all that is peculiar to this sect is condemned by Christ and his apostles, and that is sufficient for us.*" Lard. Vol. I. 128.

or a country, or a nation, is become enamoured of wisdom, those who live in that house, or city, or country, or nation, must learn from him to mend their lives. For as the aromatic spices, which exhaling spread on the breeze, fill with their sweet odour those who are near; in the same manner the friends and acquaintances of a good man derive from the breath of virtue, which emanates, far and wide, from his character, a perfume that adorns and enriches their own*" What a glorious testimony this to the divine origin, to the reform-

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* Το δε σοφιας γενος αμμῳ γης εξομοιουται δια τε πληθυν απεριγραφον, και διοτι τας μεν της θαλαττης επιδρομας ἡ ὑποταινιος αμμος ανακρουει, τας δε των αμαρτηματων ὁ παιδειας λογος. Ουτος δε κατα τας θειας ὑποσχεσεις αχρι των περατων του παντος ευρυνεται, και τον εχοντα αποφαινει των του κοσμου κληρονομον μερων φθανοντα, παντη προς τα ἑωα, προς τα ἑσπερια, τα κατα μεσημβριαν τα προσαρκτια. Λεγεται γαρ, ὁτι πλατυνθησεται επι θαλασσαν, και λιβα, και βορραν και ανατολας. Εςι δ' ὁ ασειος ουκ ἰδιον μονον, αλλα και κοινον αγαθον ἁπασιν εξ ἑτοιμου την αφ' ἁυτου προτεινων ωφελειαν. Ως γαρ ἡλιος απαντων εςι φως των οψεις εχοντων, και ὁ σοφος των ὁσοι της λογικης κεκοινωνηκασι φυσεως. Ευλογηθησονται γαρ εν σοι, φησι, πασαι αἱ φυλαι . . . . εαντε τις κατ' οικον, η πολιν, η χωραν η εθνος γενηται φρονησεως ερασης, αναγκη και την οικιαν εκεινην, και την πολιν, και την χωραν και το εθνος αμεινονι βιῳ χρησθαι.

ing influence, to the rapid and triumphant prevalence of the word of God, while yet new and uncorrupted among men! Let it be considered, too, that it is a testimony given by one, who was himself a spectator and an agent in the scenes which he so eloquently describes. So vast and unquestionable were the facts which he delineates, that they filled his soul with the sense and conviction of their truth; and forced upon his imagination the richest figures that are to be found among the most splendid productions of nature.

Καθαπερ γαρ τα εκθυμιωμενα των αρωματων ευωδιας τους πλησιαζοντας αναπιμπλησι, τον αυτον τροπον ὁσοι γειτονες και ὁμοροι σοφου της απ᾽ αυτου σπωντες αυρας επι μηκιστον χεομενης, βελτιουνται τα ηθη. Vol. I. 647. p. 592. Compare with this passage Matt. v. 13. 14. viii. 11. xi. 19. Rom. viii. 14—17.

CHAPTER VI.

PHILO A BELIEVER IN CHRIST, AND A CHRISTIAN WRITER.

THE account which this noble author gives of the Jewish and Egyptian converts, and the high praise which he bestows upon them, warrant the conclusion, that he was himself of that number; and that as being a *Christian*, he published his many excellent works to promote the knowledge and influence of christianity. This inference is very important: and as it stands in direct opposition to the judgment of modern critics, I shall endeavour to substantiate it by evidence drawn from his own writings. If Philo believed in Jesus, and if he published two books in defence of his followers, we might naturally expect him to take some notice of his divine master. Yet, if we may credit those learned men who are supposed to have read him, not the slightest allusion to our Lord occurs in any part of his voluminous productions. Such silence, if true, is indeed, extraordinary; and the concurrence of the learned, in supposing it true, when otherwise, is not less ex-

traordinary. A veil of mystery assuredly hangs over the subject, and I will here attempt to draw it asunder.

If we duly examine the New Testament, we shall find our Lord often designated by his own personal name, and often by those high titles which express his office as the Son of God. Amiable as Jesus of Nazareth sounded in the ears of all those who knew his character, or understood his gospel, his name excited the derision and abhorrence of the unbelieving world. And although he was generally hated in every country, in no country was he more hated than in Egypt; where personal animosity against the founders of christianity was inflamed by deep rooted enmity against the Jews. Philo wrote in a country, and at a period, when the ignominy which hung on the christian profession was most bitterly felt. Notwithstanding his open temper, his resolute conduct, his ardent zeal, and elevated enthusiasm, Philo was yet a deliberate, a circumspect, and a wise man. Accordingly he has every where avoided to awaken the prejudices of those unbelievers, to whom he addressed his works, by mentioning the personal name of Jesus Christ. But he did not from regard to the same prejudices abstain from mentioning him at all. On the contrary, he speaks, and very frequently speaks, of the Blessed Jesus, though

under those lofty titles which distinguish him as the minister of heaven, and which raised him, as far as possible, above the unreasonable prepossessions of his readers.

When our Lord first appeared as the messenger of heaven, he was announced by a voice from above, as the *beloved Son of the Father.* In the language of the Jews, a teacher, who is superior to others in dignity, order, and authority, is called *father;* and the person instructed and acknowledged by him, his *son.* On this principle, all those who embrace and obey the gospel, are said to be *born* of God, or to be *children* of God; because they are taught of God, they are educated as it were in the school of God, the law being a pædagogue to train them up in his family, and Christ a still higher master to qualify them for his heirs. In the same, though in a more appropriate, sense, God proclaimed Jesus as his *son,* intimating, that he was instructed by him, and that the doctrine which he revealed was of his inspiration. That he was a teacher authorized from above, is the burden of our Lord's discourses with his enemies; and he who observes the variety of occasions, in which he directly asserts, or indirectly leads his hearers to infer, that he derived his authority from heaven, and from no other source, and the stubborn reluctance of his countrymen to admit his claims, will feel

the propriety of his being thus announced by God himself at the commencement of his ministry.

Now, this is one of the titles, under which Philo speaks of Jesus Christ, as we shall perceive from the following passage. "It becomes him," says he, "who devotes himself to the father of the world, to employ, as his intercessor, his own son, who is most perfect in virtue, in order that he might obtain the forgiveness of his sins, and the supply of every good *." Nothing, I presume, can be more clear, than that the *Son of God*,

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* Αναγκαιον γαρ ην τον ἱερωμενον τῳ του κοσμου πατρι, παρακλητῳ χρησθαι τελειοτατῳ την αρετην υἱῳ, προς τε αμνησιαν αμαρτηματων, και χορηγιαν αφθονωτατων αγαθων. Vol. II. 155. or p. 673. It is true, indeed, that Philo often calls this *world*, as the offspring of the creator, the *son* of God; but this he styles the *sensible* or *younger* son of God, in opposition to the *logos*, whom he describes as the beloved and *first born* of God. Thus, Τον μονον και αγωπητον αισθητον υἱον απεκυησε, τονδε τον κοσμον. Vol. I. 351. Ὁ μεν γαρ κοσμος ὁυτος νεωτερος υἱος, ἁτε αισθητος ων. From this he distinguishes the Logos or Christ by calling him πρωτογονον υἱον. Vol. I. 308. From this double application of υἱος to the *world* as the offspring of God, and to Jesus as the son of God. *Celsus* (See Origen, p. 308.) took occasion to say, that, "They call Christ the *son* of God, because the ancients gave that title to the world which was made by God. The charge is not true. Our Lord from the beginning was styled the Son of God, because he was so called

here spoken of, means our Lord Jesus Christ. For who else can answer to such a description, as we see in this place given to him. He is represented as the Son of the Universal Father; as perfect in virtue; as the Comforter, by whose mediation we may obtain the pardon of our sins and the supply of every good.

The language of Philo is in perfect unison with the following words of the apostle John. "My little children these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." 1 John ii. 1. If we compare these passages, it is impossible not to conclude that the writers mean the same person. Both Philo and John call him by the same name (παρακλητος), *an advocate;* both say that through him is to be obtained the pardon of our sins; and while one calls him *righteous*, the other represents him as *most perfect in virtue.* Philo uses the very peculiar language of

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by the voice of God himself at his baptism. Philo had the gospel before him; and from this source, and not from Plato, as the learned have hitherto most absurdly supposed, he has derived the appellation *Son of God.* This son of God is sufficiently defined, when he is represented as the mediator, through whom are obtained the pardon of sin, and the hope of a future God.

John: he had therefore the same views with John of Christ and his gospel.

The Jewish writers often express the attributes of God by a term corresponding to *logos* in Greek, or *word* in English. The term logos, in this collective sense, is personified; and we are in danger, unless we be aware of the effects of eastern imagery, to understand it as denoting a real person. The apostolic writers extend the word thus denoting the divine perfections, to the christian doctrine, which originated in those perfections, and which places them in a new and engaging light; and they preserve, when thus extended, its former personification. The following examples will justify this assertion. In John, chap. xii. 47. our Lord speaks thus, "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth him, the word (the logos) that I have spoken, the same (logos) shall judge him in the last day." The term logos, or word, as our translators render it, means here, beyond dispute, the *gospel*, or the message which Jesus communicated from God to the human race. But it is represented, in this place, not merely as a *message*, but as a *messenger*, and invested not only with the qualities

of a man, but with the office and dignity of a judge.

A similar use and personification of the christian doctrine occur in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. iv. 12. "The Logos of God is alive and active.—and is a judge of the meditations and thoughts of the heart; and there is no creature concealed from him, but all things are bare and laid open before the eyes of him, with whom we have to do." In this instance the gospel is described under the figure of him, who shall judge the world, and pass upon the different characters of men, a final decision.

The apostle Peter thus expresses himself, Acts x. 36. "The Logos whom God hath sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, this Logos is the lord of all." Which verse, it is clear, asserts the conviction of the apostle, that the gospel was not to be confined, as he had previously supposed, to the Jewish nation, but to be extended to the Gentiles, whom it was to command by the evidence of its divine authority, and whose lives it was to regulate by its precepts and motives. This is the meaning of the word in the above passage. Its personification is no less obvious; as it is described under the idea of a man preaching peace, and of a sovereign holding dominion over all others.

The spread of christianity in the world is delineated in these strong terms by the apostle Paul, 2 Thess. iii. 1. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Logos of the Lord may run and be glorified." The words convey an allusion to a man running in the public games, who, if successful, was glorified or signalized by very distinguished honours. The glory obtained by success in them was the theme of much encomium, and poetic description among heathen writers.

In 2 Tim. ii. 9. the same author uses this remarkable language. "Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, in whom I am ill treated, even with chains; but the Logos of God is not chained;" that is, "Though I am arrested and confined by the hand of violence, the doctrine revealed by Jesus Christ cannot be arrested nor confined. It will spread in spite of human violence, and surmount in the end every impediment, thrown in its way by the wickedness of the world. —It will finally run and be glorified." A similar prosopopœia is observable in Acts xx. 32. "And now I recommend you, brethren, to God, and to the Logos of his grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among the saints." The members of this sentence correspond by inversion: thus, "I recommend you to the Logos, who is able to build you up, and to God, who will give you an inheritance among the

saints." Logos in this, as in the other passages, denotes the doctrine of Christ, which, by its divine influence, improves and edifies the heart of its sincere professor. The personification of it here is bold and striking: animation and activity being ascribed to it, as well as to God himself.

Another very striking instance of this kind occurs in James i. 14. "But every one is tempted of his own lust, being drawn and seduced thereby. Lust, then, conceiveth and begetteth sin; and sin having grown to maturity, bringeth forth death. Be not mistaken, beloved brethren; every good gift, every perfect endowment, is from above, descending from the father of light, with whom there is no change, nor the shadow of a change. His will has brought us forth by the Logos of truth, so as to be the first fruits amongst his own creatures." In the first part of this beautiful paragraph sin and death are evidently invested with the passions of a living being: lust gives birth to sin, and becomes the parent of death. The writer carries on the same animated representation to the last clause of the sentence, and describes the Deity as conceiving by the instrumentality of his Logos, and bringing forth children, which, as being rational and virtuous, were peculiarly his own. The Almighty and his Logos, however, beget their common offspring, for reasons different from those which actuated lust

and sin. Base passion influenced the latter, whereas counsel or wisdom induced the former to conceive.

This personification, indeed, pervades the christian scriptures; but I shall produce only one more example. Acts xiv. 3. "The apostles were emboldened in the Lord, who bore witness to his gracious Logos, giving signs and wonders to be done by their hands." This language, be it observed, is borrowed from the forms used in the administration of justice. The Logos is brought to his trial, and his evidence, as a divine commissioner, examined; and to enforce the testimony of his attendants, the Sovereign of nature interposes in his behalf, and demonstrates the truth of his delegation by signs and wonders. The Evangelist Mark, at the close of his gospel, places before us a similar representation of the apostolic doctrine. "And they went and everywhere proclaimed the Logos, the Lord co-operating with them, and confirming him by means of signs following." That is, the apostles went about to announce the Logos, with miracles, like so many witnesses attending in their train. The original of *confirming* is a legal term, and signifies to authenticate by solemn evidence.

The term Logos, thus personified and applied to the gospel, is sometimes extended by the sacred writers to its illustrious founder, when they

speak of him as a *divine messenger*, and not as a *human being*. This extension of it to our Lord, as being no more than calling a person by his *office* or *occupation*, is very natural, and what often occurs in common life. But in the case of Jesus, it was the more so, in consequence of his office being habitually described under the figure of a person. For when the apostles had once personified his commission, it was scarcely possible for them to preserve it, in their imagination, distinct from the commissioner himself. The imaginary and the real being they insensibly blended together; and attached by the mere association of ideas to the latter, the appellation by which they were in the habit of denominating the former. But whenever they call our Lord by the title of Logos, their object was not to assert any thing concerning his *personal nature*, but merely to exalt him as the messenger of heaven.

The truth of this assertion I shall confirm by a few examples. Luke, in his Introduction, uses these words, "It seemed good to me also to write, following all things in order, from above, as they have delivered them unto me, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and attendants of the *Logos*." Here the Logos is made the object of sight, and surrounded by ministering servants. The Evangelist, therefore, transferred the term, which, taken in its customary accep-

tation, denoted the christian doctrine, to Christ himself, of whom he is here evidently speaking.

The apostle Paul, on one occasion, thus addresses the Jews, Acts xiii. 26.—" Men, my brethren, descendants of the race of Abraham, and those among you (of any other race) who fear God, to you the Logos of this salvation is sent. For this same LOGOS the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and their rulers, have through ignorance condemned; having by that means fulfilled the warnings of the prophets, which every Sabbath are read among you." In this admirable speech we see first, that St. Paul calls by the name of Logos that life and immortality which is brought to light in the gospel; and, secondly, that he immediately applies the very same title to Christ himself, who fell a victim to the ignorance and cruelty of his countrymen. The address of our author on this occasion, indeed, is greatly to be admired. In order to exhibit, in the strongest light, the guilt of those who had crucified their Messiah, he keeps out of sight the personal name of Jesus, with which prejudice had connected the bitterest odium, and held him forth under the high appellation of his office. By this means, he fixed the attention of his hearers, not on the person of Jesus as coming from Nazareth, but on his character as coming from God; having judiciously concealed the man under the splendour of his

heavenly mission, and magnified the barbarity, committed on an innocent sufferer, into a crime committed against Jehovah himself.

In the epistle to Titus i. 3. the apostle applies the same word to our Lord. "But God in due time hath manifested his Logos through preaching, which is committed unto me, according to the commandment of God, our Saviour." The apostle John evidently uses the term in reference to Christ himself in the beginning of his epistle: "That which was from the beginning, which we heard; which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled OF THE LOGOS OF LIFE—declare we unto you." Here the writer refers to the Saviour as seen, and heard, and felt by them on his being announced as the Son of God, and more particularly after his resurrection from the dead. I add only the following instance. "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called THE LOGOS OF GOD."

Now, since the term Logos, which in its original import means the perfections of God, is personified and represented by that personification, as a person independent of God; since, moreover, it is thus figuratively applied, first to the christian doctrine, and then to Christ himself; we may hence explain those passages in the New Testament, where our Lord is spoken in such lofty

terms as seem to imply that he was a *supernatural* being. Thus, when John says that the Logos was in the beginning with God, and was God; and that the same Logos who made all things became flesh; or when Jesus says of himself, that he is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*; that he is the *bread*, which cometh down from heaven; that he was glorified with the Father, before the world was; that he was to return where he was before, John xvii. 4.: or when Paul says of him, that the rock which Moses struck was *Christ*, and that in him dwelt the fulness of the divinity bodily. 1 Cor. x. 4. Col. ii. 9. All these, and similar expressions, are to be taken as synonymous with the idea of him, which is conveyed by the term Logos, and which denotes the Saviour in his *official capacity*, in contradistinction to his *personal nature*. I now proceed to shew that Philo uses the word Logos precisely in the same sense with the apostolical writers, as denoting Jesus Christ in his official character, without any regard to his person or nature. "Earth," says he, "water, air, and all things contained in them, whether animate or inanimate, mortal or immortal —these, together with the sun, moon, and other stars, which revolve in harmonious courses, in their celestial orbits, are led by their sovereign God, as a flock by their shepherd, according to an invariable law; he having placed over them,

HIS LOGOS, his first born son, who, like the viceroy of a great king, will superintend the care of this sacred flock *." Here it is asserted, that the Logos is invested by God with universal power; and that he superintends all things, as a shepherd does his flock. Now, this same assertion is made by Christ himself. " And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." To the same effect writes St. Paul, " Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" meaning, that *in* the name of Jesus every tongue should bow to the glory of God the Father.

It is here moreover observable, that our author

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* Καθαπερ τινα ποιμνην, γην και ὑδωρ και αερα και πυρ, και ὁσα εν τουτοις φυτα τε αυ και ζωα, τα μεν θνητα τα δε θεια, ετι δε ουρανου φυσιν, και ἡλιου και σεληνης περιοδους, και των αλλων αςερων τροπας τε αυ και χορειας εναρμονιους, ὡς ποιμην και βασιλευς ὁ θεος αγει κατα δικην και νομον, προσησαμενος τον ορθον αυτου λογον, πρωτογονον ὑιον, ὁς την επιμελειαν της ἱερας ταυτης αγελης, ὁια τις μεγαλου βασιλεως, ὑπαρχος διαδεξεται. Vol. I. 308.

calls the Logos the *Son of God*, the *first born* son of God, and the "shepherd of a sacred flock." Elsewhere he calls him the *beloved Son* of God: and these we know, are epithets applied to Christ in the New Testament. In the following passage the Logos is recognised as the *image of God*, as the *minister* of God, and under God, as the author of the world. "The Logos, by which the world is made, is the *Image* of the Supreme Deity. As we perceive the sun's light, though the sun is not itself seen; and behold the brightness of the moon, though its orb may not appear to the eye; so men look up to, and acknowledge the likeness of God in his minister, the Logos, whom they esteem as God *." Very similar to this is the account which St. Paul gives of the Logos in the person of Jesus. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who is the image of the invisible of God, the first born of every creature.

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* Καθαπερ γαρ την ανθηλιον αυγην, ὡς ἡλιον, ὁι μη δυναμενοι των ἡλιον αυτον ιδειν, ὁρωσι, ὁυτως και την του Θεου εικονα τον αγγελον αυτου λογον, ὡς αυτον κατανοουσι. Vol. I. p. 656, or p. 600.

For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. i. 12—18.

The following passage, if duly examined, puts it beyond doubt, that by the Image of God Philo means the *Lord from heaven*. "God, the author of divine virtue, was willing to send his *Image* from heaven to the earth, from compassion to our race, that he might wash away the impurities, which fill this life with guilt and misery, and that he might thus secure to us a better inheritance*." Here we see the nature and object of the gospel stated in a few unequivocal words. The Son of God came from heaven, and appeared in the world, that he might wash away the sins of men, and thus qualify them for a divine inheritance. On this glorious errand he was sent by the universal Father, who, says Philo, had compassion on our race; and who, says Paul,

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* Βουληθεις ὁ Θεος της Θειας αρετης απ' ουρανου καταπεμψαι την εικονα επι την γην, δι' ελεον του γενους ἡμων, ἱνα μη ατυχηση της αμεινονος μοιρας, απολουσαμενον τα καταρρυπαινοντα ἡμων τον αθλιον και δυσκλειας γεμοντα βιον. Vol. II. p. 669.

was not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and live.

Philo and the apostle Paul agree farther in representing the Son of God as a *High Priest.* Their words are so important, that it is worth while to compare them together. "The Logos of God is alive and active, and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing even to a separation both of life and spirit, both of joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart; nor is any creature hidden before him; but all things are bare and laid open to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do. Having therefore *a great High Priest,* who hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest, that is not touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and grace to help us in time of need." Heb. iv. 12.

Philo expressly declares that the Esseans supposed the religion of Moses to consist, as man does, of a body and of a soul; and that, while they rejected the former as the grosser and subordinate part of it, they embraced the latter, as the essential and more refined part. This is precisely the view, as has been already observed,

which the apostle Paul gives of this question, when he represents judaism as consisting not in the *flesh*, but in the *spirit*, not in the external and literal, but in the inward metaphorical sense. In this they were directly opposed by the Jews, who disbelieved in Jesus, as they tenaciously adhered to the letter of the Jewish law, and represented the metaphorical interpretation as a dangerous innovation, subversive of the law itself. The two parties being thus at issue, one maintained the perpetuity of the levitical code in all its branches; the other endeavoured to set it aside by shewing, that the several institutions, of which it was composed, were but types or shadows of a higher, more permanent, and more refined order of things, and pointed to Christ as the introducer and chief of that new and happy dispensation.

Now, in pursuing this interpretation, the christian teachers, with the apostle Paul at their head, applied the terms, which designated the types and symbols of the old dispensation to Christ, as the great person in whom they were realized and fulfilled under the new. But this transfer of the terms was catachrestical, a figure of speech, founded only on analogy, and to be interpreted with great latitude. I will illustrate this by an example. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the

sea. And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was CHRIST." 1 Cor. x. i. Here the meat and drink, miraculously supplied by Moses to the Jews who sojourned with him in the wilderness, are represented by the apostle as symbols of the spiritual food administered by Christ. For this reason the apostle calls them *spiritual* meat, and *spiritual* drink, and then adds, that the rock was *Christ;* meaning that Christ was the real person of whom the rock was the symbol.

In this manner the *high priest,* under the ceremonial law, was a type of Christ, and his office being a *shadow,* of course disappeared with the advent of its real object. When the office of high priest was thus superseded, or abolished, the title necessarily required to be abolished with it. But the prejudice of the judaizing christians, in favour of such a title, made it matter of prudence in the apostles, instead of abolishing, to *transfer* it to Christ. The conduct of the apostolical teachers in this respect supposes a tender regard for the prepossessions of their weaker brethren; and they depended on their good sense for interpreting the title with that latitude, which is required by the

difference of character and situation between Christ the spiritual, and the literal, high priest.

Philo has discussed this question with the utmost clearness and precision; and his language and sentiments are so like those of St. Paul, that he could hardly have said what he has done, unless he had, as Eusebius asserts, the epistle to the Hebrews before his eyes. The Esseans is another name for the Hebrew believers. In the midst of the Egyptian Esseans Philo lived, and published his works. He could not, therefore, but be in possession of an epistle which was addressed to his brethren, and to himself in the number. Hence his writings, when properly investigated, will appear not only in unison with, but a beautiful comment on the writings of the apostles.

In Numbers xxxv. 25.—it is said that the guilty person, who fled for his crimes, to a city of refuge, should remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. On this subject our author comments in his book *De Profugis;* and has the following words: "The fourth remaining article of these propositions is the ordinance concerning the return of those who had fled for refuge, which was to be at the death of the high priest. The consideration of this, in the express letter, has created to me a difficulty in

which I cannot acquiesce. For the punishment appointed is not equally distributed; as some must have been confined for a longer, and some for a shorter season; and as some of the high priests were of a longer, others of a shorter date; and some arrived at the dignity when young, others when old. And those who were accidentally guilty of bloodshed, must have sought this shelter, some at the beginning of the priesthood, and others when the high priest was near his death. I maintain, therefore, that the high priest alluded to was not the man (who in the literal sense was the high priest) but the sacred Logos, the word of God; who is incapable either of voluntary or involuntary sin. Accordingly, it is my opinion, that it was his lot to have parents the most pure and incorruptible, having for his father God, who is father of all, and Divine Wisdom for his mother, by whom all things came into being.—These things are said by me not without reason; but that I might inculcate that the most natural period for the fugitive's return is the death of the high priest. For while this high priest, I mean the most sacred Logos, lives and predominates in the soul, she cannot harbour any voluntary sin (for then she becomes naturally disposed neither to entertain, nor to commune with any sort of evil). But if the Logos dies in the soul, not that he perishes, but separates from

her, then admission is given to voluntary offences. While he continues in full health and vigour within us, sin departs, and again returns by his departure. An unblemished high priest for our judge is a distinguished blessing; as he inherits the peculiar privilege of being liable to no oversight or error. It is therefore meet for us to pray that in our soul should live he, who is our high priest, and reprover, and judge, and king; who, sitting in judgment over our thoughts, discerns all that come before his tribunal *."

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* Τεταρτον και λοιπον ην των προταθεντων, ἡ προθεσμια της των πεφευγοτων καθοδου, του αρχιερεως θανατος, πολλην εν τῳ ῥητῳ μοι παρεχουσα δυσκολιαν. Ανισος γαρ ἡ τιμωρια κατα των τα αυτα δρασαντων νομοθετειται, ειγε ὁι μεν πλειω χρονον αποδρασονται, ὁι δε ελαττω. μακροβιωτατοι γαρ (ὁι μεν), ὁι δε ολιγοχρονιωτατοι των αρχιρεων εισι. και ὁι μεν νεοι, ὁι δε πρεσβυται καθιζανται· και των ἑαλωκοτων επ' ακουσιῳ φονῳ, ὁι μεν εν αρχῃ της ἱερωσυνης εφυγαδευθησαν, ὁι δε ηδη μελλοντος τελευταν του ἱερωμενου ——λεγομεν γαρ τον αρχιερεα ουκ ανθρωπον, αλλα λογον θειον ειναι, παντων ουχ ἑκουσιων μονον, αλλα και ακουσιων αδικηματων αμετοχον . . . διοτι, οιμαι, γονεων αφθαρτων καθαρωτατων ελαχεν, πατρος μεν θεου, ὁς και των σύμπαντων εςι πατηρ, μητρος δε σοφιας, δι ἡς τα ὁλα ηλθεν εις γενεσιν . . . . . Ταυτα δε ουκ απο σκοπου μοι λελεκται, αλλα ὑπερ του διδαξαι, ὁτι φυσικωτατη προθεσμια καθοδου

This passage is a specimen of the manner in which Philo comments on the ritual law. On every occasion he endeavours to set it aside, representing its most material articles as of no avail in themselves, and useful only as they were either external symbols of some moral truths, or types of some spiritual object yet to be fulfilled. This is the ground, on which Jesus and his apostles proceeded in rejecting the letter, and unfolding the spirit, of judaism; and it is the very ground which divided the believing from the unbelieving Jews. St. Paul represents Jesus, the word of God, as our high priest; and Philo is more express in saying,

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φυγαδων, ὁ του αρχιερεως εστι θανατος. ἑως μεν γαρ ὁ ἱερωτατος ὁυτος λογος ζῃ, και περιεστιν εν ψυχῃ, αμηχανον τροπην ακουσιον εις αυτην κατελθειν· αμετοχος γαρ και απαραδεκτος παντος εινai πεφυκεν αμαρτηματος. εαν δε αποθανῃ, ουκ αυτος διαφθαρεις, αλλα εκ της ἡμετερης ψυχης διαζευχθεις, καθοδος ευθυς δίδοται τοις ἑκουσιοις σφαλμασι. Ει γαρ μενοντος και ὑγιαινοντος εν ἡμιν, εξωκιζετο· μετανιστάμενου παντως εισοικισθησεται. Γερας γαρ εξαιρετον ὁ αμιαντος αρχιερευς, ελεγχος, εκ φυσεως κεκαρπωται, το μηδεποτε εις αυτον παραδεξασθαι γνωμης ολισθον. Διοπερ αξιον ευχεσθαι ζῃν εν ψυχῃ τον αρχιερεα, ὁμου και βασιλεα, και δικαστην και ελεγχον, ὁς ὁλον ἡμων το διανοιας αποκεκληρωμενος δικαστηριον, ὑπ' ουδενος των απαγομενων εις κρισιν δυσωπειται. Vol. I. 561, 562, 563. or p. 464, 465.

that the temporal high priest was not himself the real high priest, but a type of the Logos, or the son of God.

The apostle says of Jesus, that, as our high priest, he had neither father nor mother among men, see Heb. vii. 3.; and Philo writes that it was his lot to have parents the most pure and incorruptible, having for his father God, the father of all, and Divine Wisdom for his mother. When our author speaks of Jesus as the word of God, he could not help alluding to him as a *man;* and hence it is, that in speaking in one place of the Logos, Philo says that he was *in the image of man* *, and that this is one of the names by which he was called. In this passage too he virtually speaks of the death of Christ: for he speaks of the death of the high priest, and unequivocally asserts, that the high priest was the most holy Word of God. Nor could he represent the *death* of the temporal high priest, as a type of the real and spiritual high priest, unless the latter, as well as the former, was known to have died.

The cluster of beautiful metaphors, which Philo uses on this subject, shews the propriety of the apostle's language in a preceding passage; and

* Και αρχη, και ονομα θεου, και λογος, και ὁ κατ' εικονα ανθρωπος προσαγορευεται. De Confus. Ling. p. 341. Similar to this is the following language of St. Paul, εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπος γενομενος. Phil. ii. 7.

determines the latitude with which the terms *high priest*, *mediator*, *intercessor*, and *judge*, should be understood, when applied to Christ. The Logos is the high priest; the soul is the temple, into which he enters to perform his office; and the sacrifice most acceptable to God, which he there offers, is a pure and spotless conduct. When the Logos gains admission into the sanctuary of the heart, *sin* is excluded, and is no longer able to dwell there; or, in the words of the apostle, "Christ being now in the soul, the body becomes dead, because of sin; and the spirit revives, because of righteousness." Rom. viii. 10. The Logos having taken up his residence in the soul, exercises the office of a *reprover*, of a *judge*, and of a *king*. All the recesses of the mind are laid open before him; he is liable to no mistake, to no oversight, and even the thoughts are subject to his inspection. All creatures come before his tribunal, and none can avoid the keenness of his sight. Such is the representation of Philo, when he speaks of the son of God as the high priest; and such precisely is the representation of the apostle Paul. "The Logos of God," says he, "is alive and active, and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing even to a separation both of life and spirits, both of joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, nor is any creature hidden before him; but

all things are bare and laid open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

This awful high priest, whose inspection none can evade, is, nevertheless, says the apostle, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and though tempted in all things like as we are, *yet without sin.*" This circumstance Philo has not omitted. In one place he speaks of the Son of God as displaying the most affectionate zeal and unwearied endeavours to stay the deadly plague of sin among mankind, while he is himself capable neither of voluntary nor involuntary sin. "I cannot help admiring," says he, "the sacred Logos instantly pressing with unremitting earnestness to stand between the dead and the living *." He speaks here of the promptitude and tender solicitude, with which Jesus sacrificed his own life to rescue mankind from moral death,

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* Βιος εμπρεπης κοσμῳ, τῳ πατρι και ποιητῃ συνεχως και αδιαστατως ευχαριστειν, μονονουκ ενθυμιωντι και αναστοιχειουντι ἑαυτον προς ενδειξιν του μηδεν θησαυριζεσθαι, αλλα ὁλον ἑαυτον αναθημα ανατιθεναι τῳ γεγενηκοτι θεω. θαυμαζω και τον μετα σπουδης απνευστι δραμοντα συντονως ἱερον λογον, ἱνα στη μεσος των τεθνηκοτων και των ζωντων. Vol. i. p. 501—508. *It becomes a citizen of the world to present with earnestness, and without intermission, thanksgivings to the universal Father; and converting himself into an incense, or an element the most valuable in his treasures, to*

under the figure of Aaron, who, at the command of Moses, stayed the plague, by instantly standing between the dead and the living." See Numb. xvi. 48.

In the following passage Philo speaks of the Son of God in the character of a mediator and intercessor with God. "The Great Father of all gave this eminent gift to Him who surpasses all the angels in time and dignity, namely, to his Holy Word, that he should stand midway and separate the creature from the creator. Accordingly this Word is the Intercessor for mortal men, who are always tending to corruption: and he is appointed a Messenger and a Legate from the supreme Lord to his subjects." In this office he greatly delights, and he exults in his office, when he says, "It was I who stood between you and the Lord. For he is not unbegotten like God, nor begotten as we are, but a medium between both. So that in respect to the Creator he is able to obtain assurance, that he never will destroy, nor reject the race of man; and in respect to the creature, that he may by faith be assured of

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offer his soul and body as the incense or element most acceptable to God. I admire the sacred Logos who earnestly, and, as it were, out of breath, hastened to stand between the dead and the living.

this truth, that the God of all mercies will never neglect the work of his hands. I therefore (says the Word of God) proclaim peace to all the world, from that Being who maketh wars to cease, from God who is the guardian of peace*." Here our Lord is represented as bringing from God the glad tidings of hope and pardon. He proclaims mercy and peace, not only to the Jews, but to all the world, and thus conformably to the representation of ancient prophecy, proves himself the *Prince of Peace*. Nor should we overlook, that

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* Τῳ δε αρχαγγελῳ και πρεσβυτατῳ λογῳ δωρεαν εξαιρετον εδωκεν ὁ τα ὁλα γεννησας πατηρ, ἱνα μεθοριος ϛας το γενομενον διακρινῃ του πεποιηκοτος. Ὁ δε αυτος ἱκετης μεν εϛι του θνητου κηραινοντος αει προς το φθαρτον, πρεσβευτης δε του Ηγημονος προς το ὑπηκοον. αγαλλεται δε επι τῃ δωρεα, και σεμνυνομενος αυτην εκδιηγειται φασκων ——κἀγω εισηκειν ανα μεσον κυριου και ὑμων, ουτε αγεννητος ὡς ὁ Θεος ων, ουτε γεννητος ὡς ἡμεις, αλλα μεσος των ἀκρων, αμφοτεροις ὁμηρευων, παρα μεν τῳ φυτευσαντι, προς πιϛιν του μη συμπαν αφανισαι ποτε και αποϛηναι το γενος, ακοσμιαν αντι κοσμου ἑλομενον· παρα δε τῳ φυντι, προς ευελπιϛιαν του μηποτε τον ἱλεον Θεον περιιδειν το ἰδιον εργον. Εγω γαρ επικηρυκευσομαι τα ειρηναια γενεσει παρα του καθαιρειν πολεμους εγνωκοτος, ειρηνοφυλακος αει Θεου. Vol. I. p. 501.

our author holds forth the Son of God, as surpassing all the angels of God in time and dignity. The apostle exhibits him in the same light, "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they: for unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day I have begotten thee." Heb. i. 4. In reference to his being thus begotten of God, which was foretold by the Psalmist, and realized at his baptism, Philo says, that the Logos was not *unbegotten:* yet he was not *begotten* as we are; for, as the real high priest, he was without father and without mother, see Heb. vii. 3. God himself, who proclaimed him as his son, being his father, and Wisdom, or the Holy Spirit which descended on him being his mother.

In the New Testament it is again and again declared, that Christ is the honoured agent under God, in conferring eternal happiness on mankind. This same declaration is explicitly made by Philo in the following passage. "It is of the highest moment to every person, that can make his way in the course that is set before him, to strive without remission to draw near the Divine Word, who is above all, and who is the fountain of all wisdom; that by drinking largely of that spring, instead of

death we may hereafter be rewarded with everlasting life *."

The resurrection of the dead, by Jesus Christ, is by implication asserted in the following passage. "When a just man is consigned to death, he is not lost, nor is he added to the numbers who have gone before him, but he is translated to another state by the Word of that great cause of all things, by whom the world was created. For God by his said Word, by which he made all things, will raise the perfect man from the dregs of this world, and exalt him near himself: he will place him near his own person †."

The gospel, as the word of God, stands opposed to the doctrines or traditions of men; and

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* Προτρεπει δε ουν τον μεν ωκυδρομειν ικανον, συντινειν απνευσι προς τον ανωτατα λογον θειον, ὁς σοφιας εσι πηγη, ἱνα αρυσαμενος του ναματος αντι θανατου ζωην αιδιον αθλον ευρηται. Vol. I. 560, or p. 464. The author here appears to have had before his eyes the following words of our Lord: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water which I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life." John iv. 13. 14.

† Ηνικα γουν τελευταν εμελλεν, ουκ εκλειπων προσιθεται, ὡσπερ ὁι προτεροι μητε προσθεσιν, μητε αφαιρεσιν κεχωρηκως, αλλα δια ρηματος του αιτιου μετανισταται, δι'

those who embraced it were said to be taught of God. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all *taught of God;* every man therefore that hath heard and learnt of the Father cometh unto me: verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth in me hath everlasting life." John vi. 45. Philo inculcates the same solemn assurance. "Those who relinquish human doctrines, and become the well disposed disciples of God, will be one day translated to an incorruptible and perfect order of beings *." This incorruptible and perfect order of beings, to which the sons or disciples of God shall be translated, are thus described in the epistle to the Hebrews. "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heb. xii. 22.

Thus, I presume, it appears beyond contradiction, that Philo frequently speaks of Jesus

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ου και συμπας κοσμος εδημιουργειτο· ινα μαθης οτι τον σοφον ισοτιμον κοσμῳ ὁ Θεος ηγαγε τῳ αυτῳ λογῳ και το παν εργαζομενος, και τον τελειον απο των περιγειων αναγων ὡς ἑαυτον. Vol. I. p. 165. p. 131. Compare these words of Philo with the language of our Lord, John v. 24. viii. 51. xi. 25.

* Οι δε ανθρωπων μεν ὑφηγησεις απολελοιποτες, μαθηται δε Θεου ευφυεις γεγονοτες . . . . εις το αφθαρτον και τελεωτατον γενος μετανιςαται. Vol. I. 164.

Christ. He speaks of him, it is true, not under this name, nor directly as a human being, but always under those high titles, which distinguish him as the minister of God. His writings, therefore, are in the strictest sense christian, though they contain allegorical interpretations of the law, often fanciful, yet always elegant, ingenious, learned, and strictly conformable to the taste and genius of those times. Nevertheless, these writings are interwoven with many important facts, and many new observations, which serve to illustrate the evidence, and the nature of christianity; and are eminently calculated to decide those controverted doctrines respecting the person and the death of Christ, which so long have unhappily divided the christian world.

Though it would lead me beyond my present purpose to give even a general view of the various works published by this great and good man, yet I shall briefly lay before my readers, the ideas which he appears to have entertained of christianity. He considered it as a divine system, containing, without any mixture of absurdity, mystery, or contradiction, precepts and motives to virtue, calculated in the highest degree to enlighten the understandings, and to reform the manners of mankind, and valuable on this account, and on this account alone. He represents the Son of God as sent from heaven with the most

gracious message to mankind; and the object of this message was to induce them, by the assurance of hope and pardon, to leave their sins, and thus to become qualified for a divine inheritance. He no where mentions Jesus in the character of a man: and he thus inculcates, that all disputes respecting his person are entirely foreign to christianity; that he is important and interesting to mankind only as the minister of God; and that those who believe and obey him, as the minister of God, will be raised by him to an immortal life, though they may never think or speak of his personal nature.

We cannot, indeed, look forward to eternal happiness through Christ, without believing that he was a man; that he worked miracles; that he died and rose from the dead. But these facts are so clearly stated in the memoirs of his life, that no one can doubt them without questioning the authenticity of those memoirs. The history of his public life, composed by credible eye-witnesses, and attested by multitudes of other spectators, some of whom must have lived many years after his death, was extant in Egypt when Philo published his works; and so notorious was the truth of that history, that even the most stubborn enemies of the gospel could not hope to contradict it with effect. This seems to be the real reason of his silence, respecting the humanity, the

miracles, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus: he saw these points attested beyond contradiction; and as they are the *means*, and not the *end*, of our faith in Christ, he directs his readers to the latter, as the only thing in the gospel worthy of their attention, leaving them to regard and to value the former only by implication. Accordingly he lays down no articles of faith as necessary to salvation; and he leads us by his silence to consider even the death of Christ as having no efficacy in itself, but as deriving its importance from the resurrection of the dead, which it was intended to establish. Faith, repentance, and reformation comprehended, in his opinion, the essential conditions of the gospel on the part of mankind. He represents the sacrifice of unblemished virtue, as the only sacrifice acceptable to God: the resolution to be no longer guilty, as the most effectual atonement to expiate guilt; to be no more a slave of sin, a sure title to become an heir of immortality *.

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* Philo discarded the whole of the ritual law, and is express in declaring, that contrition and repentance are the only atonement for sin, the only means of reconciliation with God. This is the tenor of his language, whenever he adverts to this subject. Ἡ κακωσις αὐτη ἱλασμος εϛι . . . ὁταν γαρ τα ἡδεα περισυλαται, δοκουμεν κακουσθαι· τοδε ϛι προς αληθειαν ἱλεω τον θεον εχειν. Vol. I. 121. p. 93. Ουρανος και

On this principle Philo acted when describing the followers of Jesus in Judea and Egypt; he represents them not as believing the peculiar truths, but as practising the unrivalled virtues of the gospel. His conduct in this respect, as I have already observed, shews the greatest wisdom. The Greeks and Egyptians, however debased, while they hated alike the rites of the Jews, and the doctrines of the Christians, pretended to respect the duties of morality. He therefore holds up to their acceptance a divine system, embodied in the conduct of its professors, in the highest de-

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κοσμος αναθημα Θεου του πεποιηκοτος· και ὁσαι μεντοι κοσμοπολιτιδες ψυχαι και Θεοφιλεις ἑαυτας ανιερουσιν ὑπο μηδενος αντισπωμενοι Θνητου καθαγιαζουσαι και καλλιερουσαι τον ἑαυτων αφθαρτον βιον. Vol. I. 657. p. 601. In vol. ii. p. 151, he says, " If a man be wicked or unjust, his sacrifices are abominable, his rites profane, and his prayers blasphemous in the sight of God; and he obtains by them, not the forgiveness, but the recollection, of his sins. On the other hand, the sacrifice of a just and holy man ever remains effectual and undecayed, when the victim offered by him is consumed, or rather though he offers no victim at all. ' For what can be that sacrifice which is real and substantial in the sight of God, but the piety of a soul which loves God.' Η γαρ αληθης ἱερουργια τις αν ειη, πλην ψυχης Θεοφιλους ευσεβεια.

gree subservient to the moral duties, yet stripped of that exterior, which might excite the aversion of unbelievers. By this measure, he also complied with the solemn injunction virtually given by Jesus himself, namely, to make known his disciples to the world by their mutual love, and by the fruits which they produced, in order to glorify God, rather than by any peculiar creed or forms of worship.

About seventy years after the publications of Philo, Justin Martyr addressed his apology to the senate and people of Rome. And it is curious and interesting to observe the very great similarity between these two writers in regard to the grounds, on which they recommend the gospel to the reception of the Heathens. Justin, as well as Philo, represents it without those mysterious doctrines, by which it soon became encumbered; and holds it up as a system of divine truths, calculated to reform the world, and valuable only for its moral influence. He lays hold of the precepts of Christ, comprehended in his sermon on the mount, and details them, in order to shew to the Romans the nature and object of his religion. The account he gives of Christ as a speaker, is in substance the same with that of Philo in regard to the Esseans. "His words," says he, "were few and pointed; for he was

not a sophist, but spoke with the power of God."*

Justin, moreover, lays no stress on the death of Christ, nor even mentions it as the means of atoning for sin. On the contrary, he declares in the most explicit terms, that the imitation of the divine perfections is the only condition that will entitle us to become immortal and happy with God in another world. His words are too important to be omitted. "We are taught, and we have full assurance for the truth of this doctrine, that God accepts only those who imitate the sobriety, the righteousness, the benevolence, and the other virtues which belong to him—that he, as being good, made all things of unfashioned matter, for the use of men whom, if by their works they prove themselves worthy of his design, he will raise above corruption and pain, and honour them with the privileges of his kingdom." P. 14. ed. Thirlby.

Philo defends the gospel, and holds it forth to the reception of the Pagans, as a divine philosophy, healing the otherwise irremediable disor-

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* Βραχεις και συντομοι παρ' αυτου λογοι γεγονασι, ου γαρ σοφιστης ὑπηρχεν, αλλα δυναμις θεου ὁ λογος αυτου ἠν. Apol. 1. p. 21. edit. Thirlby.

ders of sin, and washing away the impurities of the world. Justin Martyr recommends it to the people of Rome for the same glorious influence. "After having received," says he, "the Christian doctrine, we have abandoned the Pagan gods, and through his son worship him, who is the only uncreated God. Those of us, therefore, who before delighted in impurities, now rejoice in sobriety; those who practised the magical arts, now have devoted themselves to the benevolent and eternal Father; those who sought to acquire wealth above all things, now make their possessions in common, and give to every one that has need; those who hated and slaughtered each other, and who maintained no intercourse, as being of different tribes, now, after the appearance of Christ, live in the same communion, praying for their enemies, and endeavouring to convert those who unjustly hate them; that having lived agreeably to the fair precepts of Christ, they may have the well grounded hope of obtaining from God, the sovereign of all, the same glorious rewards with ourselves." P. 20.

Philo, we have seen, compares the influence of the gospel in reforming society, as reflected from the lives and conversation of those who embraced it, to the incense which impregnates and sweetens the breeze. Justin asserts the same fact in more clear, but less figurative language. "Christ,"

says he, " hath admonished us not to imitate the wicked; but to lead them by patience and meekness from whatever is base and evil in conduct; and we can point out many instances among us of men, who ceased to be violent and immoral, being overcome by the sobriety of neighbours, or by the unexampled patience of injured sojourners, or by the tried integrity of merchants, that were Christians."*

I shall conclude this chapter with a few remarks on the opinions of the learned respecting the writings of Philo.

" The personification of the Logos," says Dr. Priestley, Early Opinions, Vol. I. p. 320. " consisting of the attributes of power and wisdom, &c. was certainly introduced by the Platonists, and from them it was adopted by the christian fathers." This point is insisted upon also by the late Theophilus Lindsey, and other unitarian cri-

* Εκεινους δε προσδεχεσθαι αυτον μονον δεδιδαγμεθα και πεπεισμεθα, και πιστευομεν, τους τα προσοντα αυτῳ αγαθα μιμουμενους, σωφροσυνην, και δικαιοσυνην, και φιλανθρωπιαν, και ὁσια οικεια θεῳ εστι—ὁι εαν αξιους τῳ εκεινου βουλευματι ἑαυτους δι' εργων δειξωσι, της μετ' αυτου αναστροφης καταξιωθηναι, προσειληφαμεν συμβασιλευοντας, αφθαρτους και απαθεις γενομενους. Apol. i. p. 14.

tics. See Lindsey's Sequel, p. 3.: though, as it appears to me, entirely without foundation; the Logos being frequently personified in the Christian Scriptures, not only by the Apostles, but by our Lord himself.

Philo is generally thought to have been a Platonic philosopher, and to have derived from Plato his notion of the Logos and its personification. This opinion also is altogether unfounded; and there are three leading facts sufficient to prove it so. First, the ideas of Philo on this subject agree with those of the apostolic writers; and, as they are peculiar to the gospel, the former must have copied them from the latter, and from no other source. Secondly, Philo is the historian, and, as we shall more fully see in the sequel, the warm advocate of those who believed in Jesus. He speaks of them as surpassing all other men in wisdom and virtue; and as he was brought up in the midst of those believers, who flourished in Egypt, he was taught by them in the nature and object of the Christian doctrine. All his writings prove that, by the religion of Moses, he meant the religion of Jesus, and he enforced the truth of it no less by his example than by his eloquence. Thirdly, the doctrine of the Logos, as taught by Philo and the Apostles, was altogether unknown to Plato and his followers previously to the Christian era. Philo, therefore, could not pos-

sibly have copied his ideas from that celebrated philosopher. It would have been material to the argument of those, who derive from Plato the personification of the Logos, to shew that it is contained in his writings. But Dr. Priestley himself is obliged to acknowledge the contrary. The following are his own words. "But it appears to me from a pretty careful examination of the writings of Plato, that this was not done by himself, though the confusion of his ideas gave occasion to it, or something like it, in his followers. According to Plato, the universe was made by the Supreme God, whom he often styles *the good*, without the instrumentality of any subordinate being whatever, only making it according to a pattern previously formed in his own mind. Language to this effect is frequent in his writings; but there is a manifest confusion in his account of the ideas of the divine mind, by means of which the plan of the universe was formed; so that he sometimes makes them to be a second principle of things, and the world itself, which was produced from those ideas, a third principle. But I do not find that he ever proceeded so far as to make the divine mind νους, or λογος, a *second God*, a distinct intelligent being." Early Opinions, vol. i. p. 321. Dr. Priestley and his followers are therefore chargeable with a palpable inconsistence. Could the Christian Fathers

have borrowed the personification of the Logos from a philosopher, to whom that doctrine, according to their own confession, was entirely unknown?

Photius informs us, that from Philo was derived the allegorical method of interpreting scripture, which prevailed in the Christian Church.* This assertion is very true; and the cause of it is now very obvious. Origen and others knew, that Philo was an apostolic believer and a christian writer, and it was natural for them to copy an author, so distinguished by learning and eloquence.

" The writings of Philo Judæus," says a very learned writer,† " furnished the Fathers

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* Εξ ου (Φιλωνος) οιμαι και πας ὁ αλληγορικος της γραφης εν τη εκκλησια λογος εσχεν αρχην εισρυηναι. Bil. Cod. c. v.

† See an Investigation of the Trinity of Plato, and of Philo Judæus, by Dr. Cæsar Morgan. This certainly is an elegant and very learned publication; but the writer, in common with others, has entirely mistaken the real character of Philo's writings. The only modern critic, who has discovered, and proved, that this celebrated Jew was indebted for his notions to the Christian scriptures, is the very learned Bryant, whose work respecting the sentiments of Philo, though a strange composition of blunders and sagacity, of absurdity and learning, is very worthy of perusal.

of the Christian Church with the fatal means of deceiving themselves and others. The figurative language, in which that author delivered himself concerning the Logos, whenever he meant by it either the divine intellect, its internal operation, the ideal object of its contemplation, or the external expression of it, led them to imagine that he attributed to it a real and essential personality. From the epithets affixed to this supposed person, they naturally conceived, that he could be no other than our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. To make this plausible they maintained, that what was expressed by the word Logos was not in God, as it was in man, a mere power or operation, or word; but was a real living substance, possessed of a personality distinct from the great principle of existence to which it belonged. This received countenance from the doctrines of Plato, that ideas were most properly the real entities."

The Fathers certainly fell into a great error, by which they deceived themselves and others. But this, I conceive, is not a true statement of it. Philo, it is allowed, often meant by Logos the divine attributes personified; but he is far from confining the word to this ideal being. On the contrary, he has extended it to Jesus Christ; and thus he holds him forth to the world as the pre-eminent servant of God under that term, which,

in its strictest sense, denotes the attributes of God. But when he thus speaks of him, he speaks of him only in his official capacity, and intends to designate, not his nature or essence as a real being, but his commission or his claims as the Son of God. This is what Philo has done, and he was authorized in so doing by the example of the apostolic writers; and the error, of which the Fathers have been guilty, consisted in fixing to the person of Christ that word, which was designed only to denote his divine authority.

CHAPTER VII.

PHILO AN APOLOGIST OF THE CHRISTIANS.

THE manner in which our author speaks of the Esseans; the energy, the zeal, the eloquence, which he displays in his account of them, prove that he is not merely the historian, but their friend and apologist; that his object was not to gratify the public curiosity, by a lukewarm description of a hitherto unknown sect, but to defend, encourage, and support an injured people, under the various persecutions and calumnies with which they were assailed. We will point out a few instances, in which the language of Philo is obviously levelled against those charges and misrepresentations, which are known to have been urged against the early followers of Jesus.

1. Philo thus alludes to and defends the primitive believers from certain accusations which were made against them, and for which, though false, they suffered the most cruel treatment.—"Many powerful men rise against the Esseans

in their own country, some of whom, being eager to surpass the fierceness of untameable beasts, omit no measure to gratify their cruelty; and they cease not to sacrifice whole flocks of those within their power, or like butchers to tear their limbs in pieces, until themselves are brought to that justice which inspects the affairs of men; yet not one of those furious persecutors have been able to substantiate any accusation against this band of holy men."* The accusations here

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* As the enemies of the gospel had associated ideas of infamy and reproach with the christian name, the believers assumed the title of ἅγιοι, or *saints*, by which they inculcated that they were free from the impurities usually ascribed to them. This leads me to notice a remark made by Mr. Wakefield, in his excellent Commentaries on Matthew, p. 2. "The application of the word *saint* to the evangelists, apostles, and other celebrated men of the christian church, is an ignorant device of some in later times, who have not been sufficiently aware of the true import of this term. Every christian indiscriminately was denominated, in the days of the apostles, *a saint* or *holy person;* and this title was intended merely as a *general* and *political* appellation, in contradistinction to the word *heathen* or *gentile;* who was called, in a civil sense, *unholy* and unrighteous, one who was not a professor of christianity."

This account, which the writer, I believe, derived from Taylor's theory, is altogether erroneous. The term *saint* was not used by the apostles in a political sense, or to denote a christian, in opposition to a gentile. The apostles

alluded to, were such as the following—that they disturbed society, and turned the world upside down; that they were atheists or haters of the popular gods; that they were the preachers of sedition and treason, and wished to make Jesus of Nazareth king instead of Cæsar, and that, while they pretended to superior purity of morals, and undertook the arduous task of reforming the world, they were guilty in their nightly meetings, of the grossest impurities.

An observation of Gibbon renders it necessary to transcribe his words on this subject. "The precautions with which the disciples of Christ performed the offices of religion, were at first

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applied it to themselves and their brethren, in expression of their superior moral purity, as professors of the new faith, and of their entire freedom from the gross immoralities alleged against them by their enemies. Philo acted a similar part, to answer the same end; and he inculcates, by the term *holy men*, men not given to impurities, as they were sometimes accused, but men consecrated to God by distinguished sanctity. I add, that the supposition of the word being used in a *civil* sense, is injurious to the first followers of Jesus. They never aimed at making any distinction between men, but such as was marked out by their moral character. And they well knew, that an attempt to introduce a political distinction, between them and unbelievers, would countenance the notion, that their profession was merely of a political nature, and hostile to the authority of Cæsar.

dictated by fear and necessity; but they were continued from choice. By imitating the awful secrecies, which reigned in the Eleusinian mysteries, the Christians had flattered themselves, that they should render their sacred institutions more respectable in the eyes of the pagan world. But the event, as it often happens to the operations of subtile policy, deceived their wishes and their expectations. It was concluded, that they only conceived what they would have blushed to disclose. Their mistaken prudence afforded an opportunity for malice to invent, and for suspicious credulity to believe, the horrid tales, which described the Christians as the most wicked of human kind, who practised in their dark recesses every abomination that a depraved fancy could suggest, and who solicited the favour of their unknown God by the sacrifice of every moral virtue. There were many who pretended to confess, or to relate the ceremonies of this abhorred society. It was asserted, that a new born infant, entirely covered over with flour, was presented like some mystic symbol of initiation to the knife of the proselyte, who unknowingly inflicted many a secret and mortal wound on the innocent victim of his error; that as soon as the cruel deed was perpetrated, the sectaries drank up the blood, greedily tore asunder the quivering members, and pledged themselves to mutual

secrecy by a mutual consciousness of guilt. It was as confidently affirmed, that this inhuman sacrifice was succeeded by a suitable entertainment, in which intemperance served as a provocative to brutal lust; till at the appointed moment the lights were suddenly extinguished, shame was banished, nature was forgotten; and, as accident might direct, the darkness of the night was polluted by the incestuous commerce of sisters and brothers, of sons and of mothers." *The Decline*, &c. Vol. II. c. 16.

Calumnies like these, which Gibbon has so delineated as to impress on his readers a strong suspicion of their truth, while he affects himself to treat them as false, were very industriously circulated by the enemies of the Gospel from its very first appearance, and the language of Philo and Josephus was calculated and intended to refute them. The former emphatically calls the Christians, *a band of holy men*, i. e. men free from the impurities ascribed to them. His language implies, that they had no mystery but that *of godliness;* that they taught no doctrine, but righteousness, holiness, and justice;* that they

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* Παιδευονται δε ευσεβειαν, ὁσιοτητα, δικαιοσυνην, οικονομιαν, πολιτειαν, επιϛημην των προς αληθειαν αγαθων και κακων και αδιαφορων, ὁροις και κανοσι τριτ-

excelled all other men in virtue; that they despised the pleasures of sense, and deemed temperance the foundation of all moral excellence.

The enormities above imputed to the Christians were said to be committed in those religious festivals, which are known in ecclesiastical history under the name of *Agape*, and which were performed during the hours of darkness. Now Philo, in his book concerning the *Therapeutæ*, or the converts in Egypt, will be found to have given an account of this festival: and he shews that it was a Jewish institution, conducted with perfect decency and sobriety; and that in its design and tendency it far surpassed the best and purest among the festivals of Greece and Rome,* even those sanctioned by Plato and Xenophon.

τοις χρωμενοι, τῳ τε φιλοθεῳ, και φιλαρετῳ, και φιλανθρωπῳ, p. 877.—Εγκρατειαν δε ὡσπερ τινα θεμελιον προκαταβαλομενοι τῃ ψυχῃ, τας αλλας εποικοδομουσιν αρετας. And Josephus says of them, Την δε εγκρατειαν, και μη τοις παθεσιν ὑποπιπτειν αρετην ὑπολαμβανουσιν

* His words are much stronger, as he declares that the festivals of Plato and Xenophon are contemptible compared with those of the Therapeutæ. Αλλα ὁμως και ταυτα συγκρινομενα τοις των ἡμετερων, οἱ τον θεωρητικον ησπασαντο βιον, γελως αναφανειται, p. 898.

Our author, indeed, asserts, that the women joined with the men in celebrating this communion; but he emphatically declares, that they were such as voluntary mortified every sense of pleasure, and sought to unite only with God, in order by his influence to produce the fruits of wisdom and virtue.

The assertion made above by Mr. Gibbon, that the Christians imitated the Eleusinian mysteries, to render their institutions more respectable, has no truth whatever, in regard to the apostolic believers. The Gnostics, indeed, who cherished the vices, copied, as was natural, the impostures of the pagan priests; and there were not wanting men in ancient times, like this histotorian in modern days, who ascribed, indiscriminately to all the professors of the Gospel, the crimes and follies, of which they only were guilty who corrupted it. Our Lord foresaw the danger; and he solemnly commanded his apostles to pursue the very opposite conduct, in propagating his religion. "Therefore whatsoever ye have said in darkness, should be heard in the light; and whatsoever ye have whispered in the closet, should be published aloud on the house-tops." Luke xiv. 3. The Evangelist represents the above words as a command to the disciples not to make their doctrines mysterious, or to keep the knowledge of them from the people: and they

conformed with scrupulous fidelity to this injunction of their upright Lord. Hence Irenæus, with the strictest justice, thus speaks of them. "The testimony of the apostles is true: their doctrine obvious and decisive: nor is it one thing in public, another in private."

As our Lord had been thus cautious and explicit against suspicions of secrecy, we cannot wonder at the reply which he made to a question put to him by the chief priest. "Then the chief priest asked Jesus about his disciples, and his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world. I taught constantly in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews resort from all quarters, and in secret I have spoken nothing." John xviii. 19. When the Scribes and Pharisees saw, that the Saviour healed all manner of diseases, some of them naturally concluded, that he had intercourse with evil spirits. The Eleusinian and other priests, who pretended to have intercourse with the demons, performed their mystic rites in groves or subterraneous caves, where the gloom or darkness of the place favoured concealment or imposture. An instance is given in the New Testament of a Scribe, who appears to have imagined, that Christ frequented places of that description. "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest; and Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have

holes, and the birds of the air have roosts; but the son of man hath not where to rest his head:" Which is to this effect, "The deceitful and the impure have, indeed, their dens and their groves, which they frequent for the purposes of fraud and impurity. But I have no such places of resort; I have no mystic opinions; I practise no mysterious rites; nor have I any hidden treasure in which my followers may partake."

The pagans, who had not an intimate knowledge of the christians, would naturally suspect that the same enormities were committed in their nightly assemblies, which notoriously prevailed in their own mysteries.* The practice of the Gnostics assuredly favoured this suspicion. Hence the charge of putting out the lights, and indulging in promiscuous impurities, when they meet in the night for the purposes of communion and of instruction. To this unjust charge the writer of the Acts has an evident allusion; and he repels it in the following manner, "And upon the first

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* This observation is made by M. Felix, p. 305. Hæc de vestris gentibus nata sunt. Jus est apud Persas misceri cum matribus. Ægyptiis et Athenis cum sororibus legitima connubia. Memoriæ et tragœdiæ vestræ incestis gloriantur, quas vos et libenter et legitis et auditis: sic et deos colitis incestos, cum matre, cum filia, cum sorore conjunctos.—At nos pudorem non facie, sed mente præstamus, &c.

day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight. *And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.*" Acts xx. 78. The clause in Italics must appear altogether trifling and impertinent, unless we are aware, that the object of the author was to preclude the accusation urged by the enemies of the christians, that they met in darkness to practise impurities. Josephus meets the same accusation in a language still more significant and pointed. "Clamour and tumult," says he, "never disgrace their meetings; each in his turn having liberty to speak. The silence which is thus maintained within, appears like some awful mystery to those who are without; but the cause is their uniform sobriety, and the restraint of their appetites within the limits of satiety."*

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* Ουδε κραυγη ποτε τον οικον, ουτε θορυβος μολυνει, τας δε λαλιας εν ταξει παραχωρουσιν αλληλοις, και τοις εξωθεν, ὡς μυστηριον τι φρικτον, ἡ των ενδον σιωπη φαινεται· τουτου δε αιτιον ἡ διηνεκης νηψις, και το μετρεισθαι παρ αυτοις τροφην και ποτον μεχρι κορου. B. J. lib. 2. c. 8.

The account which Tertullian gives of the *Agape* is precisely the same in effect with that of Philo and Josephus. Nostra cœna—nihil vilitatis, nihil immodestiæ admittit, non

2. It is a remarkable circumstance, that the primitive christians, who sacrificed their ease, and, in many instances, their lives, to bless the world, were accused of hatred towards the human race. Multitudes in every province, and especially at Rome, were condemned, and destroyed without appeal, under the sole imputation of hating the gods and human kind. The causes of this unjust and inconsistent charge are founded in the new views and conduct, which the christian faith enjoined on its votaries. Rational as the gospel

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prius discumbitur quam oratio ad deum prægustetur; editur quantum esurientes cupiunt; bibitur quantum pudicis est utile: ita saturantur, ut qui meminerint etiam per noctem adorandum deum sibi esse. Ita fabulantur ut qui sciant dominum audire. Post aquam manualem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis sanctis, vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium deo canere: hinc probatur quomodo biberit. Æque oratio convivium dirimit. Inde disceditur non in catervas cæsionum, neque in classes discursationum, nec in eruptiones lasciviarum, sed ad eandem curam modestiæ et pudicitiæ, ut qui non tam cœnam cœnaverint quam disciplinam. Apolog. c. 39. Josephus is particular in saying, that they blessed God both before and after meat, αρχομενοι τε και παυομενοι γεραιρουσιν τον θεον. Philo mentions it as their custom to sing a hymn, and to pray before they separated, and after separating, again to return to their accustomed pursuits. It is curious to remark that, when Tertullian wrote the above passage, he had the words of Philo before him; and he has done little more than translating them.

was in its principle, and salutary in its effects, its diffusion was attended with temporary evils and convulsions. The converts no longer joined in the worship of the gods; and they resigned not only the loose pleasures, but on many occasions the serious duties of life. The pagans were no less surprised than offended with the change; and their animosities disposed them to ascribe it to no other motive than enmity and hatred. Tacitus, so renowned for his integrity and political wisdom, is in the number of those who impute this charge to the early believers; and Philo acts the more just and honourable part of defending them from it. "They fix their habitations," says he, "in gardens and villages, seeking retirement, not from hatred of mankind, but to avoid the pernicious intercourse of those who differ from them in opinions and manners."*

3. The early christians were often so situated, that they were called upon to part with their faith or with their lives. When apprehended and arraigned, they had the sad alternative proposed to them, either to deny Christ, or to be

* Τειχων εξω ποιουνται τας διατριβας εν κηποις η μοναγριοις ερημιαν μεταδιωκοντες· ου δια τινα, ωμην, επιτετηδευμενην μισανθρωπιαν, αλλα δια τας των ανομοιων το ηθος επιμιξιας, αλυσιτελεις και βλαβερας ειδοτες.

exposed to a violent death. The Saviour foresaw the dreadful trial which awaited his followers; and he animates them to a perseverance in confessing him, by representing his acknowledgment of them as his disciples, in the presence of God, and of an assembled universe, as depending on the fortitude and openness, with which they should act on such trying occasions before men. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

The sincere converts acted up to this hard condition of their faith, and justified the reasonableness and practicability of the precept, by following the example of their master. Josephus bears them the fullest testimony in this respect. "They despise terrors," says he, "and triumph over suffering by the greatness of their minds, deeming death itself, if encountered with glory, to be preferable to immortality. The loftiness of soul, which they all possess, was evinced in the late war with the Romans, in which they were wrung and dismembered, and burnt and maimed, in order to curse their legislator, and to eat any of those things which are contrary to their customs. But they complied with neither of these terms; they ra-

ther smiled under their pains, and submitted to every species of tortures without a tear: and so far were they from supplicating their tormentors, that they defied and derided them; being ready to deliver up their lives with cheerfulness, in full expectation that they shall again resume them."*

Christ admonished his disciples not to expose themselves to persecutions, which, consistently with prudence and integrity, they might avoid. This admonition was by no means unnecessary;

* The sentiments, which could support the sufferers under such trials, are thus expressed in M. Felix, p. 338. Quam pulchrum spectaculum deo, cum christianus cum dolore congreditur, cum adversum minas, et supplicia et tormenta componitur? Cum strepitum mortis, et horrorem carnificis irridens insultat? Cum libertatem suam adversum reges et principes erigit? Soli deo, cujus est, cedit? Cum triumphator et victor ipsi, qui adversum se dixit, insultat? Vicit enim qui, quod contendit, obtinuit. Qui non miles sub oculis imperatoris audacius periculum provocet: nemo enim præmium percipit ante experimentum: et imperator tamen quod non habet, non dat. Non potest propagare vitam, potest honestare militiam. At enim dei miles, nec in dolore deseritur, nec morte finitur. Sic christianus miser *videri* potest, non potest inveniri. Et quot ex nostris non dexteram solum, sed totum corpus uri, cremari, sine ullis ejulatibus pertulerunt, cum demitti præsertim haberent in sua potestate.—Pueri et mulierculæ nostræ, cruces, et tormenta, feras et omnes suppliciorum terriculas inspirata patientia doloris illudunt.

as many, not only among the Jews, but among the Gentiles, were disposed, in the ardour of their zeal and the constancy of their faith, to court rather than shun the violence which menaced them. And nothing surely was better calculated to prove, that the advocates of the new religion were not under the influence of mere obstinacy or blind fanaticism, as to use at once the skill of the serpent, and the innocence of the dove, in defending themselves and their cause; and then only to submit to deprivations, pain, and death, where these could no longer be retained, without forfeiting their honour and their hopes. The christians, indeed, had often the alternative offered of escaping disgrace and death by some trifling compliance with the genius of paganism, without renouncing their faith in Jesus. But they refused to purchase life itself by a handful of incense thrown on the altar of Jupiter, or by tasting a morsel of flesh forbidden by the law of Moses. Their persecutors, who were total strangers to the nature and effects of convincing evidence in matters of religion, were astonished at this inflexible adherence to principle, and branded it as an instance of stubbornness, which demanded the utmost rigour of punishment.

Pliny, in his well known letter to the Emperor Trajan, as well as Josephus, furnishes an unequivocal testimony, on the one hand, to the fide-

lity and firmness with which all the true believers followed the injunctions and example of their divine Master; and, on the other, to the ignorance under which the most accomplished among the pagans laboured, in regard to the principles of toleration, and the right of private judgment. "In the mean time," says he, "I have taken this course with all who have been brought before me, and have been accused as christians. Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second, and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death. Such as still persisted, I ordered away to be executed: for it was no doubt with me, whatever might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished."

Pliny, we may well suppose, was not the first in thus charging the christians with obstinacy and infatuation, and punishing them for their supposed guilt in this respect. The book which Philo published concerning the Esseans is, in many parts, employed to refute it; and hence it derives a singular value and importance. The author, with uncommon eloquence and energy, calls on the followers of Jesus to suffer and to die in support of their principles, and justifies them in undergoing the fiercest tortures rather than giving up their spiritual freedom. The

train of reasoning he uses, is that which seemed most likely to impress the minds of the pagans. Instead of recurring to the Jewish writings for examples to justify the sufferers, he appeals to those philosophers whom the Greeks themselves admired and esteemed; and shews that their sayings and their example, in many instances, breathed the same magnanimity, the same noble love of freedom, the same contempt of danger and of death, which the Jews had lately displayed in Egypt. This work, as I have already observed, is altogether founded on the persecutions of the Jews in Egypt during the three last years of Caligula's reign. It supposes not only that the Esseans suffered torture and death in support of their principles, but that they were deemed by their enemies foolish and obstinate for doing so. Philo refutes this opinion: he represents the profession of the Jews as a *prize*, as a *conflict*, in which defeat was disgraceful, and the victory far surpassing the glory of those, who fought and conquered in the Olympic games. One extract of this important work it is here expedient to translate; and I shall conclude the chapter with a few remarks in illustration of it—"Pythagoras, it is said, inculcated on his venerable sect, that they should not walk in the public way. The precept is not to be understood in a literal sense as meaning that, when we journey, we should prefer a

devious or rugged path; but in a metaphorical sense, that we should avoid the trite opinions of the vulgar. Those who have sincerely embraced philosophy, regard this precept, not only as reasonable, but sanctioned by the most sacred authority. Separating, therefore, from the herd of vulgar notions they have made a new path, inaccessible to such as are strangers to genuine wisdom, and have imbibed ideas which the impure alone are unable to entertain. I mean by the *impure*, those who have never tasted the feast of knowledge, or tasted it in an indirect and superficial manner, and hence have perverted the beauty of wisdom into base sophistry. Men of this sort being unable to perceive the intellectual light through the weakness of their understanding, the eye of which is necessarily dazzled by its excessive brightness, disbelieve, as if they lived in continued darkness, the things seen in the clearest light, thinking them to be mere prodigies or appearances not unlike the wonders, which jugglers perform to excite astonishment."

"Is it not absurd and astonishing to brand as *fugitives* those, who not only live in the midst of society, but fill several of the highest and most public offices; and, on the other hand, to compliment as *citizens*, men who have never been regarded as such, who have been sentenced to punishment and to exile, and who, so far from being able to return to their native land, cannot

even take a distant view of it without meeting death in its most frightful forms. For thousands are ready to seize and to tear them, being exasperated by a sense of the injuries done them, and at the same time acting in obedience to the laws? Is it not irrational, impudent, brutal, and something worse, not to be described for want of a name, to hold up, as overgrown in wealth, those who are destitute even of necessaries; who lead a life of toil and hardship, and earn scarcely their daily bread; who, in the midst of public plenty, submit to voluntary famine, feeding on virtue, as they say grasshoppers feed on air; and, on the other hand, to stigmatize as poor, those who are surrounded with ample possessions, large revenues, and abundance of all blessings; whose wealth, extending beyond their own families, supports large districts of indigent people, and supplies even whole communities with such things as are requisite in peace and in war. To the same folly it is owing, that they have dared to degrade as slaves men, who have derived distinction and freedom from the remotest ancestors; and to extol as free those who were born and educated in the meanest slavery. Things like these are the perverse fictions of men, who are blind in understanding, the slaves of interest, ambition, and

prejudice, which never fail to bias and to pervert the sober dictates of reason."

"It behoves the persons who are thus disordered in mind, if they have any zeal for truth, to act with the wisdom of those who, labouring under bodily disorders, consign themselves to the care of physicians to effect their recovery. But they are unwilling to cure their ignorance, that sad malady of the soul, by ranking among the disciples of wise and good men, who are desirous to unteach them their follies, and to furnish them with wisdom, as the only possession most worthy of man. For as Plato most eloquently writes, Envy (unwillingness to teach others) has no place in the assemblies of God. On the contrary, Wisdom, as being truly divine, is communicative and beneficent, excludes none from her sanctuary, but receives, with doors widely open, all who seek admission. For these her guests she draws copious draughts of pure instruction, and invites them to be inebriated with her sober streams. Those who are introduced, and who have drunk of her inspiring doctrines, now reproach themselves, that through contempt or aversion, they had so long wasted their days, and led a life that might be deemed lifeless, as a life destitute of reason. It is therefore the incumbent duty of every person to cultivate know-

ledge when young; he will then be likely to devote himself to the same pursuit in manhood, and to enjoy the happy fruits of it in old age. For as vessels, when new, retain the flavour of the liquid first poured into them, so the minds of the young preserve the ideas then impressed upon them uneffaced by the influx of succeeding impressions."*

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* Τον μεν ουν των Πυθαγορειων ἱερωτατον θιασον λογος εχει, μετα πολλων και αλλων καλων και τουτ' αναδιδασκειν, ταις λεωφοροις μη βαδιζειν ὁδοις· ουχ ἱνα κρηνωβατωμεν (ου γαρ ποσι καματον παρηγγελλεν) αλλ' αἰνιττομενος δια συμβολου το μητ' εργοις, μητε λογοις δημωδεσι και πεπατημενοις χρησθαι. Ὁσοι δε φιλοσοφιαν γνησιως ησπασαντο, καταπειθεις γενομενοι τῳ προσαγματι, λογον αυτο μαλλον δε θεσμον ισουμενον χρησμῳ ὑπετοπησαν, και δοξας αγελαιους ὑπερκυψαντες ατραπον εκαινοτομησαν αβατον ἰδιωταις λογων και δογματων, ιδεας αναστειλαντες, ὡν ουδενι μη καθαρῳ θεμις ψαυσαι. λεγω δε μη καθαρους ὁσοι η παιδειας εισαπαν αγευστοι διετελεσαν, η πλαγιως, αλλα μη ὑπ ευθειας αυτης εγευσαντο, καλλος το σοφιας εις το σοφιστειας αισχρος παραχαραξαντες. ὁυτοι το νοητον φως ἰδειν μη δυναμενοι, δια ασθενειαν του κατα ψυχην ὁμματος, ὁ ταις μαρμαρυγαις πεφυκεν επισκιαζεσθαι, καθαπερ εν νυκτι διαγοντες απιστουσι τοις εν ἡμερᾳ ζωσι, και ὁσα αν αυτοις ἡλιακων ακτινων επικρατουν-

The above paragraph forms the introduction of the book in which Philo speaks of the Esseans.

των, ειλικρινεςατα περιαθρησαντες διηγωνται, τερασια νομιζουσι, φασμασιν εοικοτα, των εν θαυμασιν ου διαφεροντα. πως γαρ ουκ εκτοπια και θαυματ᾽ οντως, φυγαδας μεν καλειν τους μη μονον εν μεσῃ τῃ πολει διατριβοντας, αλλα και βουλευοντας και δικαζοντας, και εκκλησιαζοντας, εςι δε ὁτε και αγορανομιας, καὶ γυμνασιαρχιας, και τας αλλας λειτουργιας; πολιτας δε τους η μη εγγραφεντες το παραπαν, η ὧν ατιμια και φυγη κατεγνωςαι; περαν ὁρων ανθωπους εληλαμενους, ου μονον ουχ επιβηναι της χωρας, αλλ᾽ ουδ᾽ εξ αποπτου το πατρωον εδαφος θεασασθαι δυναμενους, ει μη τισι ποιναις ελαυνοιντο θανατωντες. εφεδροι γαρ καταςειχοντων κολασαι μυριοι, και δι᾽ ἑαυτων ηκονημενοι, και νομων προσταξεσιν ὑπερητουντες. Πως δε ου παραλογα και γεμοντα πολλης αναισχυντιας, η μανιας η (ουκ εχω τι λεγω· δια γαρ ὑπερβολην ουδε οικειων ονοματων ευπορησαι ῥαδιον) πλουσιους μεν ονομαζειν τους απορωτατους, και των αναγκαιων επιδεεις λυπηρως και αθλιως αποζωντας, μολις το εφημερον κομιζοντας, εν ευθηνια κοινῃ λιμον εξαιρετον εχοντας, αρετας αυρα καθαπερ αερι φασι τους τεττιγας, τρεφομενους· τους πενητας δε τους αργυρῳ και χρυσῳ, και πληθει κτηματων και προσοδων, και αλλων αμυθητων αγαθων αφθονια περριρεομενους· ὧν ὁ πλουτος ου συγγενεις και φιλους αυτο μονον ωνησεν, αλλα και της οικιας εξω προελθων, μεγαλους

We may therefore safely conclude, that the men, of whom the author speaks, were the follow-

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ὁμιλουσδημοτων και φυλατων· διαβας δε τι μειζον και τη πολει χορηγει τα παντα, ὡν ειρηνη χρειος η πολεμος· απο δε αυτης ονειρωξεως τοις μεν αμφιθαλεσι, και τῳ οντι ευπατριδαις, ὡν ου γονεις μονον, αλλα και παπποι και προγονοι μεχρι των αρχηγετων, και προς ανδρων και προς γυναικων, επιφανεσατοι γεγονασι, δουλειαν επετολμησαν επιφημισαι. τοις δε εκ τριγενειας σιγματιαις, παιδοτριψι και παλαιοδουλοις, ελευθεριαν. εσι δε τα τοιαυτα, ὡς εφην, προφασις ανθρωπων, οἱ διανοιαν μεν ημαυρωνται, δουλοι δε εισι δοξης, επανεχοντες αισθησεσιν, ὡν το συνεδριον, ὑπο των κρινομενων αει δεκαζομενων, αβεβαιον. χρην δε αυτους, ειπερ ὁλως εζηλουν αληθειαν, μη των τα σωματα καμνοντων εν τῳ φρονειν ελαττουσθαι. εκεινοι μεν γαρ ἑαυτους επιτρεπουσι ιατροις, ὑγειας ορεγομενοι. κατοκνουσι δ' ὁυτοι νοσον ψυχης, απαιδευσιαν, απωσασθαι, γενομενοι σοφων ανδρων ὁμιληται, παρ ὡν ου μονον εσιν απομαθειν αμαθιαν, αλλα και ιδιον το ανθρωπου κτημα προσλαβειν, επισημην· επειδη κατα τον λιγυρωτατον Πλατωνα, φθονος εξω Θειου χορου ἱσταται. Θειοτατον και κοινωνικοτατον σοφια. συγκλειει δ' ουδεποτε το ἑαυτης φροντιστηριον, αναπεπταμενη δ' αει εισδεχεται τους ποτιμων διψωντας λογων· ὁις ακρατου διδασκαλιας αφθονον επαντλουσα ναμα, μεθυειν την νηφαλιον αναπειθει μεθην. οἱ δε ὡσπερ εν ταις τελεταις ἱεροφαντηθεντες, ὁταν ὀργιων γεμισθωσι, πολλα της προσθεν ολιγωριας ἑαυτους κακιζουσιν, ὡς ου φεισαμενοι χρονου,

ers of Jesus; and hence we are enabled to see the beauty and propriety of his observations.

1. It was frequently urged by unbelievers, that the Christian religion was not true, because it was *recent;* and because the founder, having appeared in a late period of the world, taught a doctrine opposite to the general apprehension of mankind. This objection was made by Celsus, who insinuates, that if Jesus was the Son of God, as his followers believed, he would have made his appearance from the beginning. The same objection was moreover made by the apostate Julian, and it cannot be doubted, but that it was made from the first promulgation of the gospel, when the force of it must have been more keenly felt. To these objections the Apostle Paul seems to allude, when he writes that Christ came *in the fullness of time.* Gal. iv. 4. And that he gave

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βιον τριψαντες αβιωτον, εν ᾧ φρονησεως εχηρευσαν. αξιον ουν νεοτητα την πανταχου πασαν, τας απαρχας της πρωτης ακμης μηδενι μαλλον η παιδεια αναθεναι, ᾗ και ενηβησαι και εγγηρασαι καλον. ὡσπερ γαρ φασι τα καινα των αγγειων αναφερειν τας των πρωτων εις αυτα εγχυθεντων οσμας, ὑτω και αἱ νεων ψυχαι τους πρωτους των φαντασιων τυπους ανεξαλειπτους εναποματτομεναι, τη φορᾳ των αυθις επεισρεοντων ηκιστα κατακλυζομεναι, το αρχαιον διαφαινουσιν ηθος. Vol. ii. p. 445, 446. 865.

his testimony in his *own proper season*. 1. Tim. ii. 6. The language of the Evangelists too, that the word was *in the beginning* with God; that the kingdom was prepared for the righteous, that the Lamb was slain, and glorified with God, *before the foundation of the world*, as it implies that the Christian was not a new dispensation, but formed the great object of providence from the beginning of time, was well calculated to meet and defeat the same objection. Philo in the above paragraph glances at the charge of innovation, generally made against the Christian teachers, and he endeavours to defend them, in their deviation from the broad way of vulgar error, by a maxim of Pythagoras. "Those who sincerely embrace philosophy, separating from the herd of vulgar notions, have made a new path, inaccessible to such as are strangers to genuine wisdom, and have attained to ideas which the impure alone are unable to reach."

2. Although Jesus Christ demands attention and reverence under a much more exalted character than that of a philosopher, yet it will not be questioned by those, who are more inclined to regard the real nature of things, than to cavil about words, that the Christian religion merits in the highest sense the appellation of philosophy. For the weighty truths which it teaches, respecting God and man, are adapted to produce in the

minds of men the principles of genuine wisdom, and to conduct them to true felicity. At the same time, that it enlightens the understanding, it interests the heart; exhibiting divine wisdom in her fairest form, and supporting her authority by the most powerful sanctions. On these grounds, doubtless, it was that the christian fathers so frequently spoke of christianity under the title *of the true* and evangelical *philosophy*, and called the professors of the christian faith *divine philosophers*. This title first occurs in Philo, who was deeply versed in the writings of the philosophers, and who saw that the doctrine, which they taught, was not worthy to be compared with the divine wisdom of the gospel. Of Pythagoras and Plato, he speaks indeed with the greatest respect; and he avails himself of their language and opinions, where there was any analogy, to recommend the doctrines of christianity. But the reputed wise and learned of his days, who opposed his divine system, he treats with great contempt. He represents them as men, who, having tasted superficially of the feast of knowledge, perverted the beauty of wisdom into base sophistry; who followed the herd of vulgar notions, and being *impure* in heart were unable to ascend the new and arduous path, which led to genuine wisdom; who, as blind in understanding, and as the slaves of interest, ambition and prejudice, were deaf to

the sober dictates of reason. This is the way in which this great and good man speaks of Apion, Helicon, and other grammarians, who opposed the gospel in Alexandria and Rome; and this is the way, had he lived long enough to know them, he would have spoken of Pliny, of Tacitus, of Plutarch and Epictetus, though Gibbon, from hatred to christianity, represents these as men, who adorned the age in which they lived, and exalted the dignity of human nature. On the other hand, our author speaks of the christian teachers as men who were pure in heart, and introduced for their purity into the sanctuary of wisdom; as men forming a divine assembly, "a council of God," as physicians willing to inform the world, and able to remedy sin, ignorance, and other sad disorders of the soul*. Philo and Josephus were themselves disciples of those holy men; and the records of these illustrious disciples furnish the most unequivocal testimony to the learning and ability of the first christian teachers. Their character and writings we can

* The names by which Philo calls the teachers of the gospel shew, that he had the highest reverence for their learning and virtues. The epithets, generally given them throughout his works, are σοφοι, γενος σοφιας, γνησιοι φιλοσοφοι, ὁσιοι, ασεισι, ασκηται, αθληται αρετης, θειος χορος, ανδρες θεσπεσιοι.

oppose with confidence to those sceptics of modern days, who would represent the early christians as all mean and ignorant. The language of Gibbon on this subject is equally marked by insidiousness and malice; and we are enabled, through the medium of the above two learned Jews, to retort upon himself the charge of ignorance. " Such is the constitution of civil society," says he, " that whilst a few persons are distinguished by riches, by honours, and by knowledge, the body of the people is condemned to obscurity, ignorance and poverty. The christian religion, which addressed itself to the whole human race, must consequently collect a far greater number of proselytes from the lower, than from the superior ranks of life. This innocent and natural circumstance has been improved into a very odious imputation, which seems to be less strenuously denied by the apologists than it is urged by the adversaries of the faith; that the new sect of Christians was almost entirely composed of the dregs of the populace *, of peasants

* The insinuations here urged are met and repelled as false by Octavius, who asserts, that the Christians did not consist merely of the lower classes; and that instead of fearing to encounter their adversaries, their adversaries dreaded and avoided to encounter the advocates of the gospel. Non de ultima statim plebe consistimus, si honores vestras et pur-

and mechanics, of boys and women, of beggars and slaves; the last of whom might sometimes introduce the missionaries into the rich and noble families to which they belonged. These obscure teachers (such was the charge of malice and infidelity) are as mute in public as they are loquacious and dogmatical in private. Whilst they cautiously avoid the dangerous encounter of philosophers, they mingle with the rude and illiterate crowd, and insinuate themselves into those minds, whom their age, their sex, or their education has the best disposed to receive the impression of superstitious terrors."*

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puras recusamus; nec factiosi sumus, si omnes unum sapimus, eadem congregati quiete, qua singuli. Nec in angulis garruli, si audire nos publice aut erubescitis, aut timetis M. Felix, p. 311. The christian teachers boldly challenged the supporters of paganism, and thus endeavoured to provoke them to a fair and honourable discussion. "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" 1 Cor. i. 20.

* If Gibbon were a fair and candid historian, he would have opposed to this representation (which by the way is chiefly the suggestion of his own scepticism), what the early apologists have said, when contrasting the moral influence of the gospel with that of paganism. "If we Christians," says Octavius, "be compared with you Pagans, our learning in some instances, indeed, will be found inferior, but *we* far

3. The learned among the heathens seems, in general, to have regarded the wonders pretended to have been done by the devotees of magic, as mere appearances unfounded in reality and truth. But their inability to deny the reality of the miracles done by our Saviour, induced them to affect a belief in the magical arts. They, therefore, classed our Lord with the magicians who had learnt their impostures in Egypt, and who exhibited the wonderful effects of them for small gain in public places, attempting by this means to evade his claims as the Son of God. As this is an assertion, the truth of which many of my readers may not be prepared to admit, I shall here produce one striking passage in corroboration of it. Celsus, addressing Jesus in the

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excel you in moral virtue. *You* prohibit adulteries and commit them, *we* deem ourselves born only for our own wives (see Tertul. Apolog. c. 16.); *you* punish crimes when committed, *we* deem it criminal even to think of sin; *you* fear only, when found guilty, *we* dread even the consciousness of guilt. The prisons are filled with *your numbers*, while none *of us* is imprisoned, excepting him who has apostatized, or him who is persecuted for his religion." M. Felix, p. 333. Tertullian, (ad Scap. c. 2.) and Lactantius, (lib. 5. c. 9.) affirm with energy and confidence, that crimes were unknown among the followers of Jesus: while public and private offenders, without exception, ranked with the enemies of christianity.

character of a Jew, thus allows the reality of his works: "Let us grant that these things were wrought by thee." "After making this concession, however, he proceeds," says Origen, "to class them with such wonders as were produced by the arts of magic; though," adds he, "this very Celsus, who here seems to allow the truth of the magical arts, wrote several books to prove their falsehood;" an assertion which, though advanced with some hesitation, is confirmed by Lucian, who, in his *Pseudomantis*, compliments his Epicurean friend, as being the author of very elegant and useful commentaries against the magicians.*

Here, then, we see that Celsus had taken pains to shew that nothing truly miraculous could be produced by the influence of the magical arts; and yet he resolves the supernatural works of Jesus into those arts as their proper cause. But how are we to account for an inconsistence so glaring and disingenuous? We can account for it only in the following manner. The works of Christ were too notorious, and too generally believed, even in the age of Celsus, to be contradicted with effect.

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* Φερε πιστευσωμεν ειναι σοι ταυτα ειργασμενα——— αρα επει ταυτα ποιουσιν εκεινοι, δεησει ἡμας αυτους ἡγεισθαι υἱους ειναι θεου. Origen. Contra Cels. p. 53. See Lucian's Works, vol. ii. p. 229. or *Pseudomantis*, 21.

Celsus, therefore, allows them to be true: but in order to preclude the necessary conclusion, that the author was the messenger of heaven, or the Son of God, he admits what in other circumstances he had disproved, that the devotees of magic performed similar, and yet greater, wonders, and then puts this specious question, "Inasmuch as the magicians do the same things, are we to regard *them* too as sons of God?" The conduct then of this base and artful enemy of the christian faith may be thus briefly stated—*He allowed those artifices to be true, which he himself had demonstrated to be false, in order that he might be thence furnished with a specious plea for rejecting as false, those miracles which he well knew to be true.* Celsus, we may well suppose, was not the first to have recourse to this argument. It must have been necessarily adopted by the enemies of the gospel in Egypt, when they first heard the signs, which our Saviour exhibited, attested by men who, in company with thousand others, had seen them with their own eyes in the light of day. How was the testimony of credible eye-witnesses to facts, which were universally believed, to be set aside, but by such artifices as that, to which Celsus, in after times, had recourse, and which is thus noticed by Philo. "Men of this sort, being unable to perceive the intellectual light, through the weakness of their

understanding, the eye of which is necessarily dazzled by its excessive brightness, disbelieve (as if they lived in continual darkness) the things which have been seen in the clearest light, thinking them to be mere prodigies or appearances not unlike the wonders which jugglers perform, to excite astonishment."

4. Our eloquent apologist complains in the next place, that their adversaries branded as *fugitives* men who remained in the midst of society, acting the honorable part of citizens, and filling even the offices of magistrates and governors; they also stigmatized as *slaves* men, whose families for ages had been distinguished by rank, learning and fortune: on the other hand, they complimented as *citizens* such persons as were known to have been slaves, and not only that, but to have been persons that lay under the sentence of death in their respective countries, on account of their crimes. This is a remarkable fact, and is thus to be accounted for. In Rome and Alexandria the enemies of the gospel, from mere enmity, countenanced those who shewed most zeal and ability in opposing it. In this class stood conspicuously Simon the magician, Apion, and Helicon, who, though slaves, were men of learning, but who obtained their freedom, by prostituting their youth and their talents to the base desires of their opulent masters. The

people of Alexandria, leaving these circumstances in the shade, affected to extol as virtuous and honorable citizens the distinguished enemies of the new faith; while they endeavoured to bring, on the other side, to a level with slaves and vagabonds, those who were most eminent in the support of it. The indignant language of Philo shews how unfairly his adversaries acted, and how widely they deviated from justice and truth, in their attempts to degrade the Jews and their cause. We have here, moreover, the testimony of a competent judge to a fact of great consequence to be known, namely, that all the Jews or Egyptians, who embraced the faith, were not led by mistaken notions, or forced by calumny and persecution to leave the respectable stations which they had previously filled; but that many of them continued at their posts, as Epaphroditus did in the court of Nero, discharging the most honorable functions of citizens and magistrates.

5. The gospel was a blessing, addressed in a peculiar manner to the poor, and it was embraced by a much greater proportion of the poor than of the rich and mighty: and such of the rich as embraced it voluntarily became poor, having sold their property, and laid it at the feet of the apostles, or distributed it in charity to their more indigent brethren. For these reasons the Jewish converts were generally called EBIONITES, a

name first applied by their enemies, as expressive not of their peculiar opinions as a *sect*, but of their meanness in society. To the reproach which was thus attached to them, the apostle Paul alludes, when he enumerates the several ignominious points of light, in which he and his fellow labourers were placed by their enemies; "As unknown though well known; as deceivers yet true; as dying, and behold we live; as severely treated, yet not destroyed; as sullen, yet always rejoicing; *as poor, yet enriching many.*" 2 Cor. vi. 8, 9.

While the early believers were thus stigmatized for their poverty, many of them were charged with over-grown wealth. This charge, in some instances, was not without foundation: for certain impostors, assuming the mask of faith, entered the christian church in hopes to enrich themselves, by the unsuspecting generosity of its members; and what might be true, in regard to a few individuals, was indiscriminately alleged by their adversaries as a crime, of which all were guilty. These inconsistent charges Philo has noticed; and he repels them with that high toned eloquence and indignation, which a great and good man is apt to display when called, in a trying emergency, to plead the cause of suffering innocence. "Is it not," says he, "irrational and replete with impudence, or madness, or some-

thing else, which from its enormity wants a name, to say that those men are *rich* who are most destitute, and in want even of common necessaries; lead a sorrowful and afflicted life; voluntarily submit to famine in the midst of public plenty, and feed on the ethereal breath of virtue, as grasshoppers, they say, feed on air.—To say, on the other hand, that those men are *poor* who abound with gold, silver, revenues, and a multitude of other possessions; whose abundance supplies not only their own friends and relations, but extending beyond their own families, relieves societies of indigent men, and furnishes even a whole city with such things as are requisite in peace and war." From this extraordinary exertion of benevolence, which, according to Philo, exceeded the power of language to describe, we may perceive the force and justice of Paul's declaration, *though poor yet making many rich.*

6. The teachers of the new faith soon found, from experience, how difficult it was to convince and to reform those who had grown old in error and in vice. They, therefore, sought to bring up in the belief and virtues of the gospel those in tender years, whose minds had not yet been preoccupied by prejudices, nor hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. The benevolent Jesus had himself directed the attention of his disciples to children, as the best qualified by their innocence

and docility for the kingdom of heaven. In conformity to this admonition the christians found it a more easy and agreeable task to extend the influence of their faith by training up the young than reforming those of confirmed bad habits. Hence Josephus says of them, that, though they despised marriage, they received the children of others, and educated them as their own, while yet tender and susceptible of instruction. Hence too Philo inculcates, as a maxim received among the Esseans, that every one should devote his early years to improvement in virtue and knowledge, because he is then likely, when grown to manhood, to persevere in the same honorable pursuit, and to enjoy the happy fruits of it in old age. The reason which our noble author assigns for this conduct, places in a very strong light, on one hand, the stubborn resistance which men, for a while, made to the evidence and influence of the gospel; and, on the other, the very great and happy change which it produced in their views and habits, after it had taken a full possession of their minds. "They regretted that they were not converted sooner; for they apprehended, that having not till then begun a life of reason, they did not till then begin to live."

7. Philo, in his account of the Therapeutæ, says, that they wished to communicate to the Greeks and to the barbarians the consummate

blessing which themselves enjoyed. This blessing was the life and immortality which Christ brought to light, and which his followers offered to the world, on the simple terms of repentance and amendment. Philo here calls it *wisdom;* and the communicative nature, which he ascribes to it, is best explained by the language of Jesus, and by the commission, which his apostles received to convert and illumine all mankind without distinction. Our author complains, that many were unwilling to have their ignorance cured, that fatal disorder of the soul, by learning of wise and good men. The personification of wisdom, under the figure of its holy teachers, is bold and animating. Wisdom, as being truly divine, is communicative and beneficent, excluding none from her sanctuary, but receiving with doors open all who seek admission. For these, her guests, she draws copious draughts of pure instruction, and invites them to become inebriated with her sober drink. The very reverse of this description was applicable to the Pagan philosophers. *They* imparted, what knowledge they had, only to those who had money to purchase it, and they despised the people as unworthy of instruction. Hence they endeavoured to keep them in ignorance, by inculcating vulgar errors or fables as the proper articles of their faith; while they communicated their real sentiments only to their own disciples, or to a favored few. Very

different was the conduct of the wise men of whom Philo speaks. Their common Master invited the weary and the heavy laden to come to him, and receive rest for their souls; he opened a well of water unto everlasting life, of which every one that is thirsty may drink; he made a feast, and sent his servants to the streets and lanes of the city, to invite the poor, the blind, the lame, and the maimed, to come and fill his house.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOSEPHUS AN APOLOGIST OF THE EARLY BELIEVERS.

To his account of the Esseans Josephus has prefixed the following paragraph: "Cyrenius, a senator, arrived with a few others in Syria, being sent there by Cæsar to administer justice to the nation, and to assess their property. With him was sent Coponius, a Roman knight, invested with supreme power over the Jews. And Cyrenius came into Judea, now added to Syria, in order to assess the properties of the Jews, and to dispose of the effects of Archelaus. But they, though dreading the very name of the enrolment, ceased to make farther opposition to it, by the persuasion of Joazarus the high priest. But Judas Gaulonitis, together with one Sadducus, a Pharisee, urged them to rebel; asserting, that the enrolment brought upon them nothing less than entire slavery, and calling upon the nation to maintain their liberty; that, by resisting, they would be successful, and, together with the secure enjoyment of their persons and properties, would

attain the still greater glory of maintaining their freedom; adding, that the deity would not prosper their efforts, unless, being resolved upon success, they pursued it with unabated ardor. The people heard these things with pleasure, and in executing them advanced from one degree of violence to another, till every calamity that can be named filled the nation, from those wicked advisers; wars, with all their attendant evils, in quick and rapid succession; the loss of friends, who might have alleviated or averted the public misery; the incursions of robbers, and the destruction of the principal men, and all this under pretence of serving the public; while they really hoped only to enrich themselves. The same men, moreover, were the instigators of seditious commotions, by which whole cities were desolated; the citizens having opposed and massacred each other, when spared by the common enemy. To this succeeded the most terrible famine, which introduced despair and extinguished the feelings of nature; the capture and demolition of our cities, till the temple of God was invaded and burnt by our enemies. Thus the destruction of our civil and religious constitution served in its turn to destroy those who combined against it. For Judas and Sadducus, the founders of a fourth sect among us, with which multitudes were enamoured, filled the

republic with immediate tumults, and by a philosophical system, till then unknown, laid the foundation of still greater evils." A. J. Lib. 18. c. i. 1.

A few observations will unfold the intention of Josephus in this important, but intricate passage. The Jewish believers were constantly accused in Judea, and in other places, of being the real authors of the revolt from the Romans, and consequently of being the real authors of all the calamities which thence befel the Jews, and which at length ended in the destruction of their country. The foundation of this charge is obvious: they followed a leader, who, they fondly hoped, would deliver Israel, trample under foot the Roman eagle, and ascend the throne of universal empire. The expectation of a conquering prince, in the line of David, awakened by the Jewish prophets, undoubtedly animated every bosom, when it occasionally burst into a flame, by the advent and miracles of Jesus: nor did his friends relinquish the soothing hope of temporal emancipation, until they had been taught more rational and enlarged views respecting the nature and object of his kingdom. The Jewish historian endeavours to shelter the believers from this heavy accusation, by ascribing all the evils usually imputed to them, to Judas and his followers. And as this Judas and his fol-

lowers were ignorantly or intentionally represented as the same sect with the Christians, Josephus is very particular in observing, that they were a distinct people. This is not an unmeaning observation casually made by him: for when in his Jewish Antiquities, and in his Jewish War, he describes the Esseans, he premises that description by a remark, that they were a philosophical sect, different from the followers of Judas.

There is another delicate circumstance, which shews the great anxiety and care with which Josephus endeavours to defend the followers of Jesus. Judas was a *Galilean*, and Josephus himself calls him a Galilean in other places; but on this occasion he calls him a *Gaulonite*; and why should he thus designate him in this place, and in this place alone? The reason is, that the christians were also known under the name of *Galileans* (a circumstance which favored the confusion of the two sects), Christ having come from Nazareth, in Galilee. Josephus wished to preclude this confusion; and he therefore describes Judas as a Gaulonite, having been born in *Gamala*, a city of Gaulonitis, though a resident of Galilee, whence he derived that name.

The enemies of the faith, I have observed, were studious to identify its professors with the disciples of Judas. The Christians, on their part,

must have been anxious to defeat this artifice, representing themselves on every proper occasion a very distinct people; and to this natural anxiety we are indebted for a very important incident, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Luke delicately notices the charge, and with great propriety avails himself of the language and advice of Gamaliel to shew, that it had no foundation in truth. See Acts v. 36.

The crimes vulgarly imputed to the disciples of Jesus are repelled by the fathers, with great vigour and animation. They boldly appeal to facts, and demand of the magistrate an enquiry into their conduct, instead of resting on popular report; and that if any of them, after a fair investigation, should be found guilty of such crimes, they should be punished as *criminals*, and not for being *christians*. And it may be observed, that the exemplary conduct and extraordinary virtue of those who were christians indeed, extorted a confession of their innocence from a person who was distinguished, as much by his persecution of the christians, as by learning and refinement.

In his well known letter to the Emperor Trajan, Pliny speaks to this effect—"They affirm, that the whole of their fault or error lay in this, that they were wont to meet together on a stated day, before it was light, and bind themselves by

an oath, not to the commission of any wickedness, but not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it."* It is of importance to observe, that this testimony of Pliny not only asserts the innocence of the christians, but that it asserts their innocence in opposition to the calumnies with which they were assailed: as though he had said, "These men meet on an appointed day to bind themselves, not to commit murder, theft, robbery, or adultery, as is reported to be the case in Rome, and other places; but, on the contrary, the object of their oath is to keep their faith, and to deliver up the trust reposed in them, and in general to keep themselves free from the crimes imputed to them."

It was the duty of Josephus, as an historian, and as a believer in Christ, when delineating the character of the Jewish christians, to notice these

* Affirmabant hanc fuisse summam vel culpæ suæ vel erroris, quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire. Carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem; seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent; ne depositum appellati abnegarent. Epis. lib. x. ep. 97. The animadversions of Lardner and other learned men on this epistle, may be seen in Lardner's Works, vol. vii. p. 287.

charges, and to bear his testimony against them; and this he has done in the most emphatic manner:—"Before a member," says he, "can be admitted into their communion, he pledges himself by a most awful oath to cultivate piety towards God; to maintain justice towards men, always to shun the wicked, and to co-operate with the virtuous; to be faithful to all men, and especially to men in power; for these, they think, receive their authority from the appointment of God. He farther binds himself that, if power be placed in his hands, he will not abuse it; that he will not endeavour to out-shine those in subordination to him, by splendour of dress, or any superfluous ornaments; that he will stedfastly adhere to the truth, and reprehend those who are guilty of falsehood; that he will keep his hands clear from theft, and his soul from unlawful gains," &c. J. W. lib. ii. c. 8. 7.

The malicious rumours circulated against the christians operated upon them as a salutary caution against admitting, promiscuously into their societies, such persons as had insidious or interested views, and were likely, by their subsequent conduct, to disgrace them. To the prudence thus bought by experience, we owe the precautions noticed by Pliny and Josephus. The testimonies of these writers corroborate each

other in a remarkable manner; and it appears to me surprising, that the great similarity which subsists in the language used by them, had not induced critics to suspect, that they both must have had in view the same people in different situations. The assertion of the Jewish historian, that the Esseans were faithful to all men, and especially to men in power, as thinking their authority of divine appointment, was calculated to shelter them from the imputation of being enemies to Cæsar, and disturbers of the state. The same assertion is made by the apostle Paul himself, in his Epistle to the Romans. His object, like that of Josephus, was to state the consistence of civil obedience with their attachment to Christ; and to preclude the charge of treason and rebellion, by a suitable submission to the magistrate in temporal affairs.

It seems the general opinion of divines, that the believers, forewarned by the predictions of Jesus, had left Jerusalem before the commencement of the Jewish war, and that consequently they did not suffer the horrors incurred by the rest of that community. The following passage of Josephus, containing an important but an indirect information, sets aside the common opinion as erroneous. "The loftiness of soul which they all possess, was evinced in the late war with the Romans; in which they were wrung and dis-

membered, and burnt and maimed, in order to blaspheme their legislator, and to eat any of those things which are contrary to their customs. But they complied with neither of those terms; they rather smiled under their tortures, and submitted to every species of torment without a tear, and so far were they from supplicating their tormentors, that they defied, and derided them; being ready to deliver up their lives with cheerfulness, as convinced that they shall again receive them." J. W. lib. II. c. viii. 10.

The believers, in the first and second centuries, rejected in general, not only the lucrative concerns of the state, but every station in the army, though the most honourable as inconsistent with their allegiance to Jesus, and the beneficent spirit of his religion. Hence Philo says of them, "None among them can be found that manufactures darts, arrows, swords, breast-plates, or even such weapons as might be converted to bad purposes in the time of peace; much less do they engage in any of those arts which are useful in war." This feature, in the character of the early christians, is very unfairly stated by Gibbon, who falsely imputes it to a pusillanimous spirit, and to a secret expectation, that the Roman empire would soon be no more. "The christians," says he, "were not less averse to the business than to the pleasures of this world. The defence

of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine, which enjoined an unlimited forgiveness of past injuries, and commanded them to invite the repetition of fresh insults. Their simplicity was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life, nor could their humane ignorance be convinced, that it was lawful on any occasion to shed the blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice or that of war; even though their criminal and hostile attempts should threaten the peace and safety of the whole community.—While they inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil administration, or the military defence of the empire. Some indulgence might, perhaps, be allowed to those persons who, before their conversion, were already engaged in such violent and sanguinary occupations; but it was impossible that the christians, without renouncing a more sacred duty, could assume the character of soldiers, of magistrates, or of princes. This indolent or even *criminal* disregard to the public welfare exposed them to the contempt, and to the reproaches of the pagans, who very frequently asked, what must be the fate of the empire, attacked on every side by the barbarians, if all mankind should adopt the pusillanimous sentiments of the

new sect. To this insulting question, the christian apologists returned obscure and ambiguous answers, as they were unwilling to reveal the secret cause of their security; the expectation that, before the conversion of mankind was accomplished, war, government, the Roman empire, and the world itself would be no more." Vol. II. c. 15.

This historian is, I believe, the first who accounts for the peaceful conduct of the early believers on the principle here stated. Their enemies, in ancient times, ascribed it to a motive very different, but equally false and uncandid, namely, the hatred which they were said to cherish towards mankind. Philo and Josephus were far more competent judges than Gibbon could be of the primitive believers; and these writers, in the most equivocal manner, impute their reluctance to bear arms, to their great humanity, to their love of peace and order, to their unsurmountable aversion to become instrumental in propagating misery and desolation. The insulting question above specified was undoubtedly put by the pagans from the most early times; and Josephus meets it by shewing, that, while the Esseans, as far as it was possible, lived in peace with all mankind, they did not decline to engage in war when inevitably brought upon them; that, instead of receding, they stood at their post in defence of their country, when

invaded by a tyrannical enemy; and that so far from sinking, as Gibbon insinuates, under their misfortunes from timidity and weakness, they nobly braved the greatest dangers, and triumphantly submitted to tortures and to death, in the firm hope of immortality, rather than yield the slightest compliance inconsistent with their character and principles. Josephus was himself in the number of those who fought and suffered, though eventually rescued from death by the providence of God. Multitudes among the Jews, of every rank, no doubt, followed his example; and it cannot be supposed that a man, who was known to be attached to the cause, and to have finished his education in the school of Jesus, should have been placed at the head of an army, had not a great proportion of that army been of the same views and profession with their general. The reader will recollect, that I am speaking of the army *of Galilee*, the province where our Lord chiefly exhibited the evidences of his divine mission; where the people followed him in greater numbers, and whence from their attachment to him as a christian sect, they received the name of *Galileans*.

It appears from Philo and Josephus, that the primitive believers, instead of inculcating "the maxims of passive obedience," were equally distinguished by their love of freedom, and their

hatred of tyranny. The Esseans, indeed, acknowledged the authority of the civil magistrate as of divine appointment, and cheerfully obeyed him, when the sword of justice, placed in his hands by the disposer of all events, was employed in protecting innocence, in punishing guilt, and in maintaining peace and order. But when this sword was perverted to different ends, the magistrate in their apprehension forfeited his sanction; and they thought themselves free, not only to prevent the abuse of it, but to wrest it from his hands, where they could do it with success.

The most unequivocal proof of the sentiments of the early christians, respecting the duty of resistance and the extent of civil obedience, is to be sought, not from their conduct towards the Roman government, which constantly suspected them, and often crushed them with a rod of iron, but from their conduct towards one another; from the love of liberty and hatred of tyranny which they breathed, and inculcated in their own societies; from the anxious care they took to exercise among themselves the spirit of independence and equality in regard to natural rights; and to remove from their community every vestige of despotism and oppression. "As to slaves," says Philo, "they have none, all are free, and all equally labour for the common good.

The supporters of slavery they condemn as unjust, and base despots, by whom are violated the sacred laws of nature, who, like a common parent, hath begotten all mankind without distinction, and educated them in the genuine bonds of fraternity, consisting, not in name, but in reality." Such are the lovely sentiments which the benevolent Jesus and his faithful followers, in ancient times, entertained, and which the gospel inculcates almost in every page.

No blessing, indeed, conferred upon us by the bounty of heaven is so valuable as the christian religion for its subserviency, were it permitted to operate in its native energy, to the equality, to the rights, and to the improvement of mankind. By the magnificent views which faith discloses, beyond the reach of unaided reason, it inspires boldness and sublimity of sentiment. Affording the most animating motives to virtue, it supports dignity and stability of character. It exhibits our relation to the common parent in the mildest light, and by that means points out to aspiring pride the *common level* of all his offspring, and thus teaches us principally to seek those distinctions, which flow from superior rectitude of conduct, or a greater comprehension of intellect. While reason leads us to reflect on the order that pervades, the constancy that preserves, the harmony that unites, the moral

world; revelation draws us by cords of love to imitate the goodness that presides over the universe, and raises us to a higher element, where with reviving freshness we may draw the breath of benevolence, peace, and magnanimity.*

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* The following are the words of a highly distinguished ornament of literature and of the established church. "In veneration for the gospel, in submission to the laws, and fidelity to the throne, the scholars of Locke and Hoadley have little to fear from comparison with the admirers of Filmer and Atterbury. For my part I hold myself as a christian bound to obey the laws of my country, and dutifully to serve, honour and submit to the powers by which those laws are enacted and administered. But I also hold that, as a Christian, I am authorized to venerate and to maintain the civil rights of my countrymen. I therefore shall always lament the indiscretion of ecclesiastics, when they contend for opinions, which, in their legitimate and practical consequences, lead to the extravagances of Rousseau, where he tells us, that Le christianisme ne preche que servitude et dependance. Son esprit est trop favorable a la tyrannie pour qu' elle n'en profite pas toujour. Les vrais chretiens sont faits pour etre esclaves. Anxious for the honour of my religion, for the comfort and instruction of my fellow subjects, I shall always declare in the words of an eloquent prelate, "that grandeur and elevation of mind, that sublimity of sentiment, that conscious dignity of our nature redeemed at so high a price, which true religion keeps alive, which holy scripture dictates, and which the spirit of the Lord inspires, will be ever pushing us on to the attainment and preservation

The gospel, which under the direction of reason is subservient to these noble ends, has indeed become, in the hands of ignorance and cunning, the instruments of quite opposite effects. Veiled with pretended mystery, ambition has perverted it into means of slavery and oppression; and priestcraft, instead of holding it up, agreeably to the solemn injunction of its founder, as the light of the world, has employed it as a torch to kindle the flames of persecution, and to darken the understanding of men with the smoke of fanaticism. We have, however, the testimony of competent judges that christianity, on its first appearance, produced on those who embraced it, an influence congenial to its native tendency. It inspired them with sentiments of manly, but rational freedom; it emancipated them from the worst of all slavery, the slavery of vice, and raised them, however depressed in the scale of society, to the dignity of being subjects to the divine government, and heirs of eternal life.

Though Josephus expressly declares, that the Esseans believed in the immortality of the soul and in a future state of retribution, he has omitted

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of those *civil rights* which we have been taught by reason to know as our's, and which we have been made to feel by experience, are, of all our's, the most indispensable to human happiness." (Warburton's Alliance, 258.) Philop. Varvicensis.

to specify their belief in the resurrection of the body. The cause of this omission we may easily perceive, if we attend to the situation in which he published his works. The re-organization of the human body, after being dissolved by death, though supported by the declaration, and illustrated by the resurrection of Jesus, was *folly* to the Greeks. In the Acts we read of the manner in which this tenet was regarded by the philosophers of Athens, though enforced by the eloquence and authority of the apostle Paul; nor is it less evident from the apologies of the fathers, that the reputed wise in the Pagan schools ever treated with derision and contempt this* leading article of the christian faith. Josephus addressed his writings to the Greeks and Romans; and he wished to conciliate them as much as possible to the gospel by throwing a veil over this important, but offensive feature. He goes even farther; he acts the part of a prudent and cautious advocate, by representing the ideas of the Greeks, not only as like those of the Esseans, respecting a future

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* Cæcilius (M. Felix, p. 96.) calls this opinion *aniles fabulas;* and Lucian says, Πεπεικασι αυτους οι κακοδαιμονες, το μεν αθανατοι εσεσθαι, και βιωσεσθαι τον αει χρονον. Hence Origen with truth says, νοηθεν το περι της αναστασεως μυστηριον θρυλλειται γελωμενον ὑπο των απειρων.

state, but as borrowed from them. "From this notion," says he, "the Greeks appear to have copied their island of the blessed, consecrated to those brave men, whom they call heroes or demigods, and the region of the impious, appropriated to the souls of the wicked in hades. By this they inculcate the immortality of the soul, discourage vice, and enforce virtue. For good men are made better in this life by the hope of future reward, and the wicked restrained by the fear of endless punishment after death. These are the sentiments of the Esseans respecting the soul; and thus they attach, by an irresistible allurement, those who have once tasted of their religion." J. W. lib. 2. c. 8. 11.

The political conduct of Josephus in thus, as far as he could, accommodating the sentiments of the Jewish believers to the prepossessions of the Pagans, is the more obvious, as in a book "Concerning the Cause of the Universe," which formerly went by his name, and a fragment of which is still extant, he explicitly declares it to be the belief of those who embraced christianity, and of his own in the number, that the body itself, though dissolved, shall rise again, and that all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to be rewarded

or punished, according to their deeds in this life.*

The writings of Philo and Josephus, considered as historians and apologists of the early Jewish believers, must appear very valuable and interesting. But they will prove useful in another point of light: as they describe the opinions and peculiar customs of the early followers of Jesus, they will serve to illustrate, with great felicity and precision, those passages in the christian scriptures which are either doubtful or obscure, and thus to settle in due time those disputes which so long have divided the christian world, and I may add, so long disgraced christianity itself. On this subject, however, it is not my intention at present to dwell. Nevertheless, I shall here produce one instance illustrative of this assertion. "Those who are detected of heinous crimes," says Josephus, "are expelled from the society; and the person expelled often perishes in a mi-

* Nos credimus corpus resurrecturum——Omnes enim sive justi, sive injusti ducentur coram deo verbo. Illi enim pater omne judicium dedit. Et ille voluntatem patris implens, judex adveniet, ille inquam, quem nos christum vocamus. A fragment only of this work of Josephus remains, and it is annexed to the second volume of his Works, Havercamp's edition, p. 145.

serable manner, being prevented by the most solemn engagement from partaking of the food used by others. He therefore feeds on herbs, or wastes to death by famine. For this reason they have compassion on many, and receive them again in their last extremities, thinking that sufferings so nearly fatal a sufficient punishment for their guilt."

The following is an instance of this sort. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the name of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. v. 1.

From this passage it appears, that a person was received as a member into the church at Corinth, who had married his *step-mother*, or, in Hebrew and Arabic phraseology, *the wife*

*of his father.** This seems to have been a man of some consequence, as his admission into the christian church caused them *to be puffed up*, or, in other words, filled them with joy and exultation. The rank or fortune of the man who thus disgraced the new religion had, however no impression on the elevated mind of the apostle Paul, who insists on his expulsion, but not without giving him the hope of re-admission, after sufficiently suffering from the anguish of repentance and mortification. The language in which he conveys this sentiment is remarkably illustrated by the above account of Josephus. While the christians at Corinth rejoiced in the union of this pretended convert, the apostle represents it as a *funeral*, which required them to mourn, rather than to rejoice. This is the figure which he uses; and we must have recourse to the form of burial among the Jews, in order to see its force and propriety.

Before the corpse was lifted up to be removed, persons, hired to mourn, began their lamentation. This is the point of light in which Paul places this morally dead offender. " And ye have not

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* This phrase, however, occurs in Greek authors. Venus calls Phædra, the step-mother of Ippolytus, πατρος ευγενης δαμαρ. Eurip. Ippol. 26.

rather mourned, that he who hath done this deed might be carried out from among you." It was usual with the Jews to collect in large bodies at a funeral: and to take a part in carrying a dead body to the grave they deemed a very laudable action. Over the deceased, when laid in the dust, was pronounced an oration, purporting, that though his body should be destroyed by corruption, God would again restore his life. To this practice the apostle continues his allusion. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, after you have assembled with my spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus Christ attending you, deliver such a one to the adversary, for the mortification of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Which is to this effect. "Instead of rejoicing in this man, however distinguished in a worldly view, as one raised to a new life by his conversion, mourn over him, as one dead on account of his heinous guilt, and consign him to the world, the great adversary of our faith, as you would a corpse which, if left alone, would spread moral infection and death among you. For this purpose convene together, as the custom is in a funeral; and in separating him from the church, my heart and soul will be with you; and his expulsion will be farther sanctioned by the authority of Jesus Christ. In his name deliver him up to the adversary, as a dead body to the dust; and

if this punishment serve to reform him, if his evil habits moulder away, as the flesh in the grave, by shame and remorse, suffer him not to pine unto death, but receive him again into your communion. Having his character thus renovated and purified by repentance, as the soul is purified by its separation from flesh and blood, he will finally be saved in the day when the Lord Jesus shall come to raise the dead, and introduce his virtuous followers into glory."

The propriety of the Apostle's language depends on the circumstance, that the punishment of excommunication was so severely felt that many, unless they were again re-admitted, pined to death by grief and famine.

CHAPTER IX.

JOSEPHUS'S ACCOUNT OF THE GENTILE CONVERTS AT ANTIOCH.—AT DAMASCUS.—THE CONVERSION OF HELEN, QUEEN OF THE ADIABENES, AND OF HER SON IZATES.

IN the seventh book of the Jewish War, Josephus has this brief, but important, passage: "The Jews at Antioch were continually bringing over a great multitude of Greeks to their worship, and making them a part of themselves." *

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* Αει τε προσαγομενοι ταις θρησκειαις πολυ πληθος Ελληνων, κακεινους τροπῳ τινι μοιραν αὐτων πεποιηντο. B. J. lib. 7. c. iii. 3. To make the Pagan converts *a part of themselves* was very characteristic of the first christian teachers among the Jews. St. Paul inculcates, that a Jew and a Greek were become *one* in Christ. Gal. iii. 27. The language of Philo, if possible, is still more emphatic; who, on the authority of Moses, recommends the Jews to regard the converts from Heathenism not only as friends, but as beings possessing the same body and soul with themselves. Κελευει δη τοις απο του εθνους αγαπαν τους επηλυδας, μη μονον ὡς φιλους και συγγενεις, αλλα και ὡς ἑαυτους, κατα τε σωμα και ψυχην, ὡς ὁιοντε, κοινοπραγουντας. Vol. ii. p. 392. or p. 795.

If learned men had sufficiently attended to the purport of this paragraph, the real sentiments of the Jewish historian in regard to christianity would not at this time have remained unobserved. But they followed the prejudices of education, and inconsiderately acquiesced in a notion which had no foundation in truth. Josephus, they suppose, is here speaking of Jews and the Jewish worship in the sense we now understand these terms. But the fact is quite otherwise; and for this assertion I shall produce satisfactory evidence. The spirit of proselytism which prevailed among the Pharisees till the days of our Saviour, ceased with the promulgation of his religion, on the part of those depraved and incorrigible Jews who opposed it. The reason is, that christianity was the vital part of judaism, and therefore judaism itself in the strictest sense; whereas those who opposed it retained only the exterior, the shell of judaism, which was both useless and disgustful, when separated from the spirit which animated it. Now what had the supporters of judaism to offer, or what had they to allure the Gentiles, when once separated from the gospel? A temporal king, whose object on one hand should be to emancipate the Jews, and on the other to destroy, or to subjugate the Gentile nations; and, moreover, a mere system of external rites, which the pagans had ever been in the

habit of regarding with derision and contempt. Would any sober minded heathens, men or women, become converts to a system so uninviting in itself, and so repugnant to their feelings? The judaizing zealots, in the days of the apostles, and afterwards, knew this, and they gave up the hopes of making converts.* Moreover, we shall see in the sequel, that those among the Jews, who obstinately resisted the claims of Jesus, so far from attempting to convert the Gentiles, themselves apostatized from the law and the prophets, and rolled in the very dregs of heathenism. When, therefore, we read in Josephus and Philo of pagan converts made to judaism, we are always to understand them as meaning that refined and spiritual judaism, which was taught by Christ and his apostles. Judaism, in this sense, had nothing to repel, and every thing to invite the notice and reception of the pagan world. It offered a benign Saviour, who came not to destroy, but to save all mankind; it abolished those repugnant rites which had hitherto separated the Jews from the rest of the nations; it proclaimed peace on earth, and good will in heaven; the pardon of sin, and the hope of eternal happiness to all without

* Basnage (lib. v. c. vi. p. 417) refers to those passages in the Mishnah and in the Talmuds, which shew that the refractory Jews not only became indifferent to all proselytes, but treated them with the greatest contempt.

distinction, on the simple terms of repentance and reformation.

The fact recorded by Josephus is thus noticed in the Acts of the Apostles. "Now they which were scattered abroad, upon the persecution that rose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but to the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the *Grecians*, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." Acts xi. 16. Here Josephus and the sacred historian agree in stating the same fact, almost in the same words. The former says, that the Jews were continually bringing over a great multitude of Greeks to their worship; the latter, that the Jews preached the Lord Jesus to the Grecians, and that a great number believed and turned unto the Lord. Here then we have an unequivocal proof, that Josephus considered the religion of Jesus as the proper Jewish religion; and that, as he firmly believed in Moses and the prophets, he also believed in Christ as foretold by them, and as the finisher of their faith.

The success which the christian teachers experienced, of course kindled against them and their cause the fury of the refractory, not only among

the Greeks, but also among the Jews: and Josephus has subjoined the following dreadful instance of it: "Then a certain man, named *Antiochus*, a ruler of the Jews, greatly esteemed for the virtues of his father, having assembled the people of Antioch in the theatre, accused his father and the other Jews of an intention to burn the city in one night; and he delivered up to them *certain foreign Jews* as confederates in this design."* These *foreign Jews* are said by Luke to have been men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch to preach the gospel.

The pretence which Antiochus had for the cruel accusation, though not specified by Josephus, was probably the following: Jesus had foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, or more generally that of *Antichrist*. The believers had no doubt of the truth of our Lord's prediction, before they saw it accomplished. But it appears that some of them interpreted his language with

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* Τοτε δη τις Αντιοχος εις εξ αυτων, τα μαλιστα δια τον πατερα τιμωμενος, ην γαρ αρχων των επ' Αντιοχειας Ιουδαιων, του δημου των Αντιοχεων εκκλησιαζοντος, εις το θεατρον παρελθων, τον τε πατερα τον αυτου και τους αλλους ενεδεικνυτο κατηγορων, ὁτι νυκτι μια καταπρησαι την πολιν ἁπασαν διεγνωκεισαν, και παρεδιδου ξενους Ιουδαιους τινας, ὡς κεκοινωνηκοτας των βεβουλευμενων.

an undue latitude, as implying the destruction by fire not only of Jerusalem, but also of Rome and the other great cities of the empire. "The Sibyl," says Lactantius, "expressly declares Rome is to perish. Hystaspes also has recorded his wonderful dream, in which is represented a youth predicting that the Roman empire, and even the Roman name, would be erased from the world*." This opinion must have been held *from the time* in which Christ predicted the fall of the Jewish state: and the actual accomplishment of that event gave it fresh strength and prevalence. The mistaken hopes of some among the believers might lead to the promulgation of it at Antioch; and thus it gave birth to the villanous accusation of Antiochus, not only against his innocent countrymen, but even against his own father, whose rank and virtues had procured him consequence and esteem. This is a remarkable instance of the great enmity which the stubborn Jews cherished against such of their brethren as embraced the religion of Jesus, and strikingly illustrates the truth of his words, "that

* Sibyllæ tamen aperte interituram esse Romam loquuntur —Hystaspes quoque admirabile somnium, sub interpretatione vaticinantis pueri ad memoriam, posteris tradidit sublatum iri ex orbe imperium, nomenque Romanum, lib. vii. cap. 15.

he came to divide the father against the son, and the son against the father."

In the same author we meet the following extraordinary passage: "The people of Damascus were eager to destroy the Jews in that city: and having from suspicion already collected and confined them in the Gymnasium, they thought the attempt to put them to death would be very easy. But they dreaded their own wives, all of whom, with few exceptions, were brought under obedience to the Jewish worship. They therefore earnestly endeavoured to conceal their design from the women: and thus they attacked the Jews who, as being crowded in a narrow place, and without arms, were in one day easily slain to the amount of ten thousand*."

The gospel was preached at Damascus even

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* Καν τουτῳ Δαμασκηνοι, την των Ρωμαιων φθοραν πυθομενοι, τους παρ' ἑαυτοις Ιουδαιους ανελειν εσπουδασαν. και καθο μεν ειχον αυτους εν τῳ γυμνασιῳ συνηθροισμενους δια της ὑποψιας, τουτο πραγματευσαμενοι, ῥᾳστην την επιχειρησιν εδοκουν. εδεδοικεσαν δε τας ἑαυτων γυναικας ἁπασας, πλην ολιγων, ὑπηγμενας τῃ Ιουδαικῃ Θρησκειᾳ. δισ μεγισος ἀυτοις αγων εγενετο λαθειν εκεινας. τους δε Ιουδαιους, ὡς αν εν ξενῳ χωριῳ, τον αριθμον οντας μυριους και παντας ανοπλους επελθοντες ὑπο μιαν ὡραν αδεως εσφαξαν. B. J. lib. ii. c. 20. 2.

before the conversion of St. Paul; and an honorable mention is made of *Ananias* as one of its distinguished votaries. This was the city in which the apostle of the Gentiles commenced his great commission to convert and reform the pagan world; and the result of his zeal, united with that of his brethren, is here stated by Josephus. Christianity, when first offered to the Gentiles, must have been more favorably received by the women than by the men. The female sex had hitherto been cruelly degraded; and the example of Jesus, and the spirit of his gospel, had a direct tendency to raise them to their proper level in the scale of society. Besides, the path of the women, when invited to the church of Christ, was not encumbered with the rite of circumcision; which mistaken zeal, for some time, had imposed on the men, as a necessary condition to share the blessings of the gospel. Nor had the female part of the heathen world the same interest with the men, in supporting the pagan religion, as not deriving from its rites the same unbounded indulgences. For these reasons they were less biassed in favour of corruption and error, and more accessible to the evidence and to the purifying influence of the new faith. These observations illustrate the above passage of Josephus, in which it is attested that all the women of Damascus, with few exceptions, were become converts to

the Jewish religion. This is an extraordinary and important fact, as it evinces, in the clearest manner, the early prevalence of the gospel, the zeal of its votaries, and the finger of God in its support. We cannot but infer that among such a multitude of women, a great number of the men also had embraced it; though this is a circumstance which Josephus, from his usual brevity, has thought it fit not to mention.

Ten thousand of the Jews were butchered on this occasion, without arms and without opposition. What could have been the cause of such unprecedented barbarity? Did the people of Damascus rise against the Jews, and put to death without any provocation, ten thousand men, with whom they had hitherto lived in peace and amity? This is morally impossible. Of such an outrage some cause must have existed; and an adequate cause cannot be found but in the introduction and prevalence of the gospel, in the zeal of its friends to overthrow the established superstition, to reform the public morals, and in the dispute which broke out on account of it in private and in public. Josephus indeed intimates, that the Jews were suspected of treasonable views, and were therefore collected and confined in the Gymnasium. The Jewish converts were suspected of preaching a Saviour, who intended to overthrow the Roman government, and to

emancipate the Jews. The historian is careful to say, that there was no ground for this suspicion, by representing the sufferers as all without arms. Let it here be carefully remembered, that Josephus clearly shews his partiality to Jesus and his followers. At Antioch and in Damascus he relates the cruel treatment which the Jews received from their enemies; but he carefully keeps out of sight the circumstances that led to that treatment. These were principally the confusion and animosities excited by the preachers of spiritual judaism, who, therefore, must have been considered by the pagans as the aggressors and as disturbers of the public peace. The Jewish historian states only what his countrymen suffered, but the cause of their sufferings, though praise-worthy in itself, yet, being detested and maligned, as productive of temporary evils, he has left in the shade.

Josephus has related at large the conversion of Helen and her son Izates to the Jewish religion. I translate only a part of his interesting narrative. "About this time, Helen, queen of the Adiabenes, and her son Izates, conformed to the institutions of the Jews, for the following reason. Monobazus, king of the Adiabenes, having fallen in love with his sister Helen, married her. When she was with child, a voice declared to him in his sleep, that a babe had begun to exist,

which, by the providence of God, would reach a happy end. Being alarmed by the voice, Monobazus immediately awoke; he told the affair to Helen, and the son when born, he called *Izates*. Monobazus had by Helen an elder son, and other children by other wives; but he loved Izates in every respect as an only begotten child. This preference, which the father did not disguise, rendered the son an object of envy and hatred to his other brethren*."

The historian then states, that the father, to secure his favorite son against the consequence of these passions, sent him to *Abennerig*, king of *Charax Spasina*, who treated him with great kindness, gave him his own daughter in marriage, with a territory, which yielded him large revenues. Monobazus, being now old, and desirous once more of seeing his son, sends for him; and having embraced him with great tenderness, he confers upon him a country, in which *amomum*

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* A. J. lib. xx. c. 2. This account in Josephus is very particular, and extends through three chapters. The author seems to consider Izates as the first born from the Gentiles, converted to the gospel; and in many places to have had his eye on Isaac and Joseph, as prototypes of Izates, and of those that should be converted from idolatry and sin to the worship of the true God. I hardly need to add, that this part of the *Antiquities*, though apparently unconnected with the history of the Jews, is highly curious, interesting, and edifying.

is produced, and then died. The mother informed the nobles, that it was the wish of her late husband to raise Izates to the throne, in preference to his brothers. To this they consented; and, in order to secure the kingdom to Izates, proposed to put his brothers to death. The queen rejects the precaution as unjust and cruel; and she placed the diadem on the head of the eldest son, till the youngest should arrive.

During the time, in which Izates continued at the fortress *Spasina*, a certain Jewish merchant, named *Ananias*, being introduced to the ladies of the court, taught him to worship God, conformably to the customs of the Jews. Ananias, becoming through them acquainted with Izates, persuaded him also to embrace the same worship. It happened about the same time that Helen was instructed by other Jews to conform to the Jewish institutions, which Izates, on hearing of the conversion of his mother, openly embraces; but thinking that he could not be a confirmed Jew, unless he was circumcised, he determined to submit to that rite; but his mother, informed of his design, endeavoured to prevent it, representing to him that the measure would be dangerous; as his subjects, on seeing him prefer a *foreign* to their *own* religion, would hate him; nor would they suffer a Jew to rule over them. Izates referred the question to Ananias, who approved

the mother's advice, and threatened withal to leave him, unless he obeyed; adding, that *if the prince was quite determined to embrace the Jewish laws, he might worship God without circumcision, and that such a determination was more acceptable than if he were circumcised.*

Izates, being satisfied with these arguments, laid aside his first design. But a certain Jew of Galilee, named *Eleazar*, a man reputed learned in the law, gained admission to the king; and finding him reading the law of Moses, thus accosted him, "Art thou not aware, O king how greatly thou profanest the law, and thus dishonourest God; for it behoves thee not to read the law, unless thou hast first done the things commanded by the law. How long wilt thou continue uncircumcised? And if thou hast not yet read the commandment respecting circumcision, read it now, that thou mightest know the impiety of not complying with it." Such remonstrance, which must have sounded terribly in the ears of that mild and pious prince, had the desired effect. He submitted to the operation, without the consent of Ananias and the mother.

Now, as by *judaism* Josephus really meant *christianity*, and as he is the historian and apologist of the christians under the name of Jews, we need no other evidence to prove that Helen and Izates, in becoming Jews,

became in reality converts to the gospel. But this can be proved by independent arguments.

1. A few years before the conversion in question took place, the disciples of Jesus received instruction to go and preach to the Gentiles a doctrine, which was not only *called* judaism, but *was* judaism in the strictest sense, purified indeed from its grosser parts, and brought into clear light from under the types and figures, under which it had been veiled by Moses and the prophets. And we are warranted in concluding, that the Jews who converted Helen and Izates were of the number of those who had engaged in this arduous commission. Ananias, we are assured, from the book of the Acts, was one who bore a conspicuous part in this commission.

2. The object of this preacher was, to induce the Pagans to become Jews in the *spiritual sense*. Ananias inculcated on Izates that he could worship God as acceptably *without*, as with circumcision, a doctrine which never entered the mind of a Jew, till it was taught by Christ and his followers: and this consideration proves with absolute certainty that Ananias was a preacher of the gospel.*

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* Philo, in a little tract, *De Circumcisione*, puts upon this rite a symbolical sense, and says that he had received it from

3. From the book of the Acts, and from the writings of St. Paul, we learn, that wherever the Apostles preached *spiritual judaism*, they were followed by their open enemies, or their false brethren, who endeavoured to frustrate their efforts by insisting on the circumcision of the body, instead of the circumcision of the heart. This was the case on the present occasion. Eleazar, a Galilean, obtained admission to Izates, and, virtually reprobating the doctrine of Ananias, defeated his end in regard to circumcision, and what is most remarkable, Josephus holds up Eleazar as a *pretender** to superior knowledge of the law, and that in the peculiar language

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certain teachers, whom he calls *divine men*. Ταυτα μεν ουν εις ακοας ηλθε τας ἡμετερας, αρχαιολογουμενα παρα θεσπεσιοις ανδρασιν, οἱ τα Μωσεως ου παρεργως διηρμηνευσαν. Vol. ii. 211. p. 811. This little piece is worthy of perusal; and the learned reader will perceive, that the two last purposes of this rite, as stated by Philo, are the same in effect with those given by the apostolical teachers.

* Ιουδαιος τις ἑτερος, εκ της Γαλιλαιας αφικνομενος, Ελεαζαρος ονομα πανυ περι τα πατρια ΔΟΚΩΝ ακριβης ειναι προετρεψατο πραξαι τουργον. Compare this with the words of the Apostle, Gal. ii. 4. 6. who calls the advocates for circumcision οἱ δοκουντες. These were afterwards known under the new and appropriate name of δοκηται, *docetæ*.

which the apostle Paul uses in designating those *men of appearance*, those false brethren, who craftily entered the christian church, to spy its liberty, and again to bring it into slavery.

The conversion of Helen and her son was an event which had no connection with the *Jewish Antiquities*, and the historian has evidently travelled out of the records in relating it. But he had an important end in view. He describes these illustrious converts as exhibiting the most engaging virtues, and sharing in the most trying situations the peculiar protection of God. His object, therefore, must have been to recommend the *christian faith* to the world, by delineating its happy effects on the character of Izates and his mother; and also the providence of the Almighty over those who embraced and practised it, though persecuted for a season. The words of Josephus are remarkable, "God preserved Izates and his children, when encompassed by many dangers, safely delivering him in circumstances otherwise inextricable; thus shewing, that in those who look to him, and confide in him alone, the fruits of piety are not unavailing."

The character of Izates and Helen is one of the most amiable and interesting recorded in history; and one incident, illustrative of their beneficence, ought not to be omitted. It is thus related by Josephus, "Helen, the king's mother,

seeing the affairs of the kingdom in peace and prosperity, and her son blessed and admired by all his subjects, and even by foreign nations, entertained a wish to visit Jerusalem, there to hail the temple of God, so celebrated over the world, and to offer sacrifice in token of her gratitude. Accordingly she begged the permission of her son to effect this purpose, which he readily granted; and having made ample provisions for her journey, and furnished her with vast sums of money, he accompanied her far in the way to that city. Her visit was very beneficial to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; for, in consequence of a famine afflicting the city at that time, she dispatched some of her attendants to Alexandria, with money, to purchase large stores of corn; others to Cyprus, to bring thence a cargo of figs. These provisions her servants collected with the greatest expedition, and she distributed them to those who were in want; and by this beneficence shewn to all our nation she left behind her the most lasting monument. Her son Izates also having heard of the famine, sent large supplies of money to the great men of Jerusalem."

Learned men have observed, that the famine *

* Eodem anno (quarto) fames gravissima per Syriam facta est, quam etiam prophetæ prænunciaverant. Sed Christianorum necessitatibus apud Hierosolymam, convectis ab

here noticed is the same with that mentioned in the Acts. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, who suffered most by the famine, were the followers of Jesus, and this for two reasons; because these in general were of the poorer classes, and because the more opulent among them made themselves poor, by a voluntary distribution of their property. This was one of the great evils to which the first believers were exposed by their peculiar situation; and while the wisdom of God ordained this evil, the goodness of God provided means to alleviate it. For the disciples, whose lot it was chiefly to suffer, were *apprized of it* long before it arrived. Prophets, in consequence, were sent to the distant opulent towns to warn the believers, to collect provisions before the famine took place. This was an event which finely illustrated the favor of God in behalf of the converts, and could not fail to produce the most happy influence on the minds of the public at large. The same divine providence brought also the amiable queen of the Adiabenes at this time to Jerusalem:

Ægypto frumentis Helena Adiabenorum regina *conversa ad fidem Christi* largissime ministravit Oros. lib. vii. c. 6. This passage of Orosius clearly shews, that the early Christian writers well understood the royal proselytes, of whom Josephus is here the historian, to be proselytes to Christianity.

and though it is natural to suppose, that she felt most for her indigent brethren in Jesus, she extended her charitable regard to the whole nation; and thus, as Josephus justly intimates, she reared in the hearts of his countrymen, a monument more honourable and lasting than that which adorned her grave.*

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* Και μεγιστην αυτης μνημην της ευποιιας ταυτης εις το παν ἡμων εθνος καταλελοιπε.

CHAP. X.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO ROME.

IT is a remarkable circumstance in the history of the christian religion, that no account has been transmitted to posterity, by what means, and at what time, it was first introduced into the metropolis of the empire; and how was laid the foundation of a church, which in all ages made so conspicuous, though melancholy figure among the other churches of christendom. And this phenomenon seems to have led a late writer to question the genuineness of the letter, which the apostle addressed to the Roman converts.

If we reflected on the unrivalled wisdom and benevolence, which are displayed in the character of our Lord; if we properly consider the stupendous works which he performed, and his open and public manner of performing them, we may well infer that, in no place, however distant, that had any intercourse with Judea, could he long have remained unknown. The glad tidings, which he proclaimed as the messenger of heaven,

the wonders which he exhibited in attestation of his claims, and the conformity of those claims to the expectation, entertained not only by the Jews, but by all other civilized nations, must, without delay, have excited universal attention, and proved the means of conveying his fame not only to Rome, betwixt which and Judea was maintained a constant and direct communication, but to the remotest regions of the Roman empire. What we may thus fairly infer from reflection on the character and miracles of Jesus, is attested to a certain extent by the authentic historians of his life. Matthew informs us that, when he began to heal diseases, his fame went throughout all Syria, c. iv. 24.; and Luke adds, that it spread throughout all the surrounding region, c. iv. 14.

The above inference cannot but dispose us to regard as by no means improbable the substance of the following narrative, written by a person who professed to be in Rome at the time the fame of Christ reached that city. "A certain report commencing with the spring season, under the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, insensibly prevailed in every place, and pervaded the world, as being truly the message of God, and unable to retain in secrecy the divine will. Every where it grew greater and stronger; saying that a certain man in Judea, making his first appearance in the

spring, announced to the Jews the kingdom of the eternal God, of which he affirmed every one, that led a virtuous life, might partake: and in order to prove that he proclaimed this blessing by divine inspiration, he wrought many surprising signs and wonders by his command alone. For he caused the deaf to hear, and the blind to see; the lame he enabled to walk, and the cripple to stand erect; he healed every disease, and banished all demons. Scaly lepers recovered their sound state by only looking on him at a distance. Even the dead, which were brought to him, he raised to life; and there was nothing which he was not able to do. And as the time advanced, the report of him was confirmed by multitudes that had come from that country; so that it was no longer a report; but a real fact. And meetings were now held in different places, for the sake of inquiring who the person, that had thus appeared, might be, and what he intended to proclaim." *Clementine Homilies*, i. 4.

Tertullian, in his Apology (c. v. p. 6.), has a passage which is thus translated by Lardner (Vol. vii. p. 232.), "Tiberius, in whose time the christian religion had its rise, having received from Palestine an account of such things as manifested our Saviour's divinity, proposed to the senate, and giving his own vote as first in his favour, that he should be placed among the Gods.

The senate refused, because he had himself declined that honour. Nevertheless the emperor persisted in his own opinion, and ordered, that if any accused the christians, they should be punished."

Though Tiberius might have received from Pilate an account of the miracles and resurrection of Jesus, he could not have received an assurance of his innocence; because Pilate had at this time sanctioned his death, as a pretended king of the Jews, and an enemy to Cæsar. It is true, that the governor was sensible of our Lord's innocence, and confessed it. But this confession was made to the Jews, made before the sentence was passed, and made as a motive to divert their malice against the accused. But after he had ratified his condemnation, Pilate would acknowledge his innocence no longer, much less would he send an assurance of it to Cæsar; because this would be to condemn himself, as a cruel and unjust judge. It is evident, therefore, that the emperor had some knowledge of Jesus through a channel very different from Pilate. Besides, he knew that the believers in Jesus were *accused;* and he knew also that the accusation was false: and as this accusation was no other than a charge of treason, for which their leader, as king of the Jews, had already suffered in Judea, nothing short of personal knowledge, nothing but the notoriety of the sentiments and conduct

of the christians at Rome could convince him of its falsehood. The narrative of Tertullian implies, therefore, that there were even at this early period, christians in Italy and Rome, though Tertullian, from a motive hereafter to be stated, designedly omitted to mention them.

Eusebius, in his Eccles. His. lib. ii. 2. has given the same history nearly in the words of Tertullian. And Orosius, towards the beginning of the fifth century, hath thus more fully stated the the fact. "Tiberius proposed to the senate, that Christ should be made a god with his own vote in his favour. The senate moved with indignation that it had not been, as was usual, proposed to them to determine respecting the reception of his religion, rejected his deification, and *decreed, by an edict, that the christians should be banished from the city*, especially as Sejanus, the prefect of Tiberius, most obstinately resisted the reception of his faith*."

Here the inference, drawn above from the

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* Senatus indignatione motus, quod non sibi prius secundum morem delatum esset, ut de suscipiendo cultu prius ipse decerneret, consecrationem Christi recusavit, edictoque constituit, exterminandos esse urbe christianos: præcipue cum et Sejanus, præfectus Tiberii suscipiendæ religioni obstinatissime contradiceret. Tiberius tamen edicto accusatoribus christianorum mortem comminatus est. Oros. lib. vii. c. 4.

wordsf Tertullian, is stated in direct terms by Orosius, namely, that in the days of Tiberius Christians were so numerous at Rome, as to attract the notice of government. But though Christ had at this time many followers at Rome, they must have been chiefly JEWS; his gospel being not as yet announced to the Gentiles, unclogged by the rite of circumcision; nor was the christian name as yet in existence. It is evident then, that by *Christians* Tertullian and Orosius meant such as were by nation *Jews*, and whom Philo and Josephus would call by no other name.

I shall next shew what Josephus and Philo have said on this subject. The former, in his Antiquities, speaks to this effect. "A Jew resided at Rome, who, having been accused of transgressing the laws, fled from his country to avoid the punishment which threatened him. During his residence at Rome, he pretended to unfold the wisdom of the Mosaic laws, in conjunction with three other men, who in every way resembled himself. With these associated *Fulvia*, a woman of rank, that had become a convert to the Jewish religion, and whom they prevailed upon to send, for the temple of Jerusalem, presents of purple and gold. These they received, and appropriated to their own use; which, indeed, was their motive at first in making the request. Tiberius (for he was informed of this

by his friend Saturninus, the husband of Fulvia, at her earnest request) commanded all the Jews to be expelled from the city. The men, to the amount of four thousand, were forced into the army by order of the senate, and sent to the island of Sardinia. But most of them being determined to preserve their laws inviolate, refused to enlist, and were put to death. And thus, because of the wickedness of four men, the Jews were driven from the city *."

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* Ην ανηρ Ιουδαιος φυγας μεν της αυτου, κατηγορια τε παραβασεως νομων και δεει τιμωριας της επ αυτοις, πονηρος δε εις τα παντα. και δε τοτε εν τε Ρωμη διαιτωμενος προσεποιειτο μεν εξηγεισθαι σοφιαν νομων των Μωυσεως, προσποιησαμενος τε τρεις ανδρας εις τα παντα ὁμοιοτροπους. τουτοις επιφοιτησασαν Φουλβιαν την εν αξιωματι γυναικων, και νομιμοις προσεληλυθυιαν τοις Ιουδαικοις, πειθουσι πορφυραν και χρυσιον εις το εν Ιεροσωλυμοις ἱερον διαπεμψασθαι. και λαβοντες, επι χρειας τοις οικειοις αναλωμασιν αυτα ποιουνται, εφ ὁπερ και το πρωτον ἡ αιτησις επρασσετο. και ὁ Τιβεριος, αποσημαινει γαρ προς αυτον φιλος ων Σατουρνινος της Φουλβιας ανηρ επισκηψει της γυναικος, κελευει παν το Ιουδαικον της Ρωμης απελασθηναι. ὁι δε ὑπατοι τετρακισχιλιους ανθρωπων εξ αυτων στρατολογησαντες επεμψαν εις Σαρδω την νησον. πλειους δε εκολασαν μη θελοντας στρατευεσθαι, δια φυλακην των πατριων νομων. και ὁι μεν δια κακιαν τεσσαρων ανδρων ελαυνοντο της πολεως. Ant. Jud. lib. xviii. cap. 3. 5.

The words of Philo, on the same subject, are to this effect. "All nations, though prejudiced against the Jews, have been careful not to abolish the Jewish rites; and the same caution was preserved in the reign of Tiberius: though, indeed, the Jews in Italy have been distressed by the machinations of Sejanus. For after his death, the emperor became sensible, that the accusations alleged against the Jews in Italy, were lying calumnies, the mere inventions of Sejanus; who was eager to devour a nation, that alone or chiefly would, he knew, be likely to oppose his impious designs and measures. And to the constituted authorities in every place, Tiberius sent orders not to molest in their several cities the men of that nation, excepting the guilty only (who were very few), and not to suppress any of their institutions, but to regard as a trust committed to their care, both the people themselves, as disposed to peace, and their laws, which like oil inure them to order and stability *."

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* Τοι γαρ ουν ὁι πανταχου παντες, ει και φυσει διεκειντο προς Ιουδαιους ουκ ευμενως, ευλαβως ειχον επι καθαιρεσει τινος των Ιουδαικων νομιμων· προσαψασθαι, και επι Τιβεριου μεντοι τον αυτον τροπον, καιτοι των εν Ιταλια παρακινηθεντων, ηνικα Σπιανος εσκευωρει την επιθεσιν. εγνω γαρ, ευθεως εγνω, μετα την εκεινου τελευτην, ὁτι τα κατηγορηθεντα των ωκηκοτων την Ρωμην Ιουδαιων, ψευδεις ησαν

Now I propose to shew, in a few words, that the men of whom Josephus and Philo here speak were Jewish believers, the same with those to whom Tertullian alludes, and of whom Orosius speaks under the name of christians. A few remarks will be sufficient for this purpose.

1. As to the time when the disturbance here spoken of happened, we may infer from Josephus, that it was near the close of Tiberius's reign: for he says in the subsequent paragraph, that Pilate was soon after removed from the government of Judea. Philo's narrative furnishes other data equally decisive. He writes that the Jews were distressed by the machinations of Sejanus, but were relieved after his death. The oppression of the Jews in Italy therefore happened a year or two before the death of Tiberius, and four or five years after the resurrection of Jesus.

διαβολαι, πλασματα Σηιανου το εθνος αναρπασαι θελοντος. ὁπερ η μονον η μαλιϛα ηδει βουλαις ανοσιοις και πραξεσιν αντιβησομενον, ὑπερ του παρασπονδηθηναι κινδυνευσαντος αυτοκρατορος, και τοις πανταχοσε χειροτονουμενοις ὑπαρχοις επεσκηψε παρηγορησαι μεν τους κατα πολεις των απο του εθνους, ὡς ουκ επι παντας προβασης της επεξελυσεως, αλλ' επι μονους τους αιτιους (ολιγοι δε ησαν) κινησαι δε μηδεν των εξ εθους, αλλα και παρακαταθηκην εχειν, τουϛτε ανδρας ὡς ειρηνικους τας φυσεις, και τα νομιμα ὡς αλειφοντα προς ευϛαθειαν. Vol. II. p. 569.

2. The wicked Jew, by whom Fulvia was converted to the Jewish religion, pretended to teach the gospel in Rome. This is now absolutely certain; because Josephus says, that he professed to teach the wisdom of the Mosaic laws, meaning the religion of Moses, spiritualized and perfected by Christ. If Josephus intended by the wisdom or philosophy of Moses, or by judaism, to designate the gospel in other places, he must mean by those terms the same thing in this passage. This argument is conclusive. We have therefore the authority of the Jewish historian for the extraordinary fact, that a few years after the resurrection of the founder, christianity was introduced into Rome; and that it so prevailed there as to occasion a very great disturbance, and to attract the notice of the emperor and senate. Similar commotions, we have already seen, attended its progress at Antioch and Damascus.

3. The testimony of Tertullian and Orosius is corroborated by Philo, to whose narrative they seem more particularly to refer. The two former suppose the sufferers to be Jews, though they call them christians---to be *accused* Jews,---to be accused by *Sejanus*,---accused towards the *close* of Tiberius's reign,---and to be *unjustly* accused; and these particulars are contained in the words of Philo, who goes farther, and hints at the nature of the accusation. "The præfect knew that

they were enemies to his impious designs," that is, his design of usurping the empire. He therefore, with the usual adroitness of wicked ministers, charged on them the treason of which he was himself guilty. The account of this noble author, who was a spectator of all the transactions, implies, moreover, that Tiberius at first, as was most natural, believed the charge; but that his eyes being soon opened, he became the protector of the people whom, a little before, he had grievously molested. The christian fathers left the first impression of Tiberius's resentment unnoticed, and they mention only his subsequent conduct in behalf of the christians.

4. Josephus has not informed us who were those men that associated with the wicked Jew, in teaching, or rather in perverting, the gospel; but if we compare this passage with the preceding one, we might infer that they were Egyptian priests resident in the temple of Isis at Rome. Tacitus informs us, that the Egyptians were implicated with the Jews in their present calamity; and for this implication, the coalition of the Egyptian priests with the wicked Jew naturally accounts. The following are the words of the Roman historian. "In the same year was brought before the senate a motion for abolishing the Egyptian and Jewish rites, and it was decreed, that four thousand of that slavish race, infected

with their superstition, should be conveyed into the island of Sardinia, there to be restrained from robberies; where, if they perished, through the severity of the climate, the loss would not be great; and that the rest of them should leave Italy, unless, within an appointed time, they relinquished their profane rites *."

5. The introduction and prevalence of the gospel in Rome were calculated to fill the emperor with alarm, and the senate with indignation, and imperiously demanded some measures, in support of the established government and of the public tranquillity; because a general expectation, derived originally from the Jewish prophets, and thence introduced into the Sibylline oracles, prevailed among the heathens, as well as the Jewish nation, that some great personage was about *that time* to appear in the east; who, like the sun, would ascend the meridian of human glory, and shed on the earth the splendor of universal dominion. The prevalence of this expectation among the pagans, is evident from

* Actum est de Sacris Ægyptiis Judaicisque pellendis. Factumque patrum consultum, ut quatuor millia libertini generis, ea superstitione infecta, in insulam Sardiniam veherentur, coercendis illic latrociniis, et si gravitate cœli interiisent, vile damnum: cæteri cederent Italia, nisi certam ante diem, profanos ritus exuissent. An. ii. 85.

the *Pollio* of Virgil, and from the express testimonies of Tacitus and Suetonius.—Because, farther, men from the east now proclaimed in Rome the news that the expected prince had already appeared in Judea; he having given undoubted proofs of his divine commission, in the works he performed, in the unrivalled wisdom and benevolence he displayed, and finally in his resurrection from the grave.---And because, finally, multitudes of Jews in the capital and in the provinces were enlisting under the banners of their expected deliverer; and not only that, but inviting the Greeks and Romans to join them, and thus openly preaching tumult and rebellion.

These being the feelings of the emperor and senate, we discover the cause of the following measures stated by Suetonius: "Tiberius suppressed the Jewish and Egyptian rites; and compelled those, who were fettered with that superstition, to burn their sacred vestments and utensils. The Jewish youths he distributed, under the obligation of a military oath, into provinces of a severe climate; while the remainder of that nation, with others of a similar profession, he removed from the city under the penalty of perpetual slavery, unless they obeyed. He moreover expelled the magicians; but granted pardon to those who recanted and promised to abandon their art. Above all, in order to secure peace,

he provided means against those who were given to plunder, robbery, and sedition. For this purpose he planted military stations along Italy, more numerous than common; formed a camp at Rome, in which were confined the prætorian bands; which till then were unrestrained, and distributed in quarters. The tumults which arose among the populace he repressed with much severity, and exercised great vigilance for preventing similar commotions *"

Tiberius was quickened to these measures by Sejanus, who, regarding the Jews as unfriendly to his own ambitious views, charged them with treason against Cæsar, and with the design of raising a leader of their own to the throne of the

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* Externas ceremonias, Ægyptios Judaicosque ritus compescuit, coactis, qui superstitione ea tenebantur, religiosas vestes cum instrumento omni comburere. Judæorum juventutem, per speciem sacramenti, in provincias gravioris cœli distribuit: reliquos gentis ejusdem, et similia sectantes, urbe summovit sub pœna perpetuæ servitutis, nisi obtemperassent, expulit et mathematicos; sed deprecantibus, ac se artem desituros promittentibus, veniam dedit. In primis, tuendæ pacis a grassaturis ac latrociniis seditionumque licentia curam habuit. Stationes militum per Italiam solito frequentiores disposuit. Romæ castra constituit, quibus prætorianæ cohortes, vagæ ante id tempus, et per hospitia dispersæ, continerentur. Populares tumultus exortos gravissime coercuit; et ne orirentur, sedulo curavit. *Suet. in Vita Tiberii*, c. 36.

universe. This charge was strongly countenanced by the majority of the Jews themselves, who as yet expected in their Messiah a temporal deliverer. Hence the cruel precaution of forcing the Jewish youths to enlist, contrary to their own laws, and to the privileges they had hitherto enjoyed under Augustus. Hence, too, such as refused, to the amount of some thousands, were put to death, and the rest of the nation banished from Italy, not to return under the penalty of perpetual slavery.

Josephus, indeed, tells us, that these calamities were brought upon the Jewish people by the wickedness of four men. Considering these men as chief agents in propagating the new religion, which they had corrupted by falsehoods, and debased by their immoralities, we may justly admit the fact. But detach them from the influence which the christian doctrine produced upon the body of the Jews and Egyptians; that is, regard them as unconnected with the rest of those nations by means of their profession, and it will appear utterly incredible that, on their account, however flagrant their guilt might have been, all their countrymen should have been exposed to such calamities. To extend to a whole people the crimes committed only by a few, and involve the innocent with the guilty, who were but four, in the punishment due to the latter only, is a de-

gree of barbarity, strange in itself, and inconsistent with the practice of the Roman government. Josephus limits the crimes alleged by Sejanus, and his partisans against the Jews in general, to *four men;* and thus he defends the followers of Jesus from the calumnies with which they were maligned, in the very place, as we shall soon see, he defends Jesus himself.

Philo assures us, that Tiberius became sensible that the sufferers were misrepresented and calumniated, and that therefore he soon put a stop to this persecution, having prohibited it at Rome, and sent an edict for the same purpose to all the provinces. In this testimony Philo is followed by Tertullian and other christian writers. And what should we expect to be the effect of such a measure, as soon as it had time to be known, and to operate in Judea. What but the effect stated in the following simple narrative, "Then had all the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified and multiplied." Acts ix. 31.

This event took place about the time when Tiberius died; and the description, which Philo gives of the state of the Roman empire on the accession of *Caligula* implies, that the repose of the churches proceeded from this edict. "What person," says he, "on beholding Caius, when, after the death of Tiberius, he had assumed do-

minion over every land and sea; which dominion held every country east, west, north, and south, in tranquillity and order; which united every province in social harmony, blended together in congratulating the return, and in enjoying the blessings of universal peace; who, I say, on seeing this felicity under Caius, which it exceeds the power of words to describe, would not be filled with extacy at the sight." If then such was the happy state of every city, of every place in the Roman empire, in consequence of the measures abovementioned adopted by Tiberius, the churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, must have *shared* in the general blessing, and derived their repose from the regulations which produced it.

Eusebius also represents the tranquillity of the churches as proceeding from the same cause. "Tiberius," says he, (Eccles. Histor. lib. ii. 2.) "threatened death to such as accused the Christians; this being suggested to his mind by Divine Providence, that the doctrine of the gospel, having the beginning of its race clear from obstruction, might freely run through every land." Dr. Lardner, indeed, has entirely overlooked the operations of this edict; and he supposes the *rest* in question to arise from the distress which the Jews endured, by the mad attempt of Caligula to place his statue in the temple of Jerusalem. But the

supposition is inadequate, and utterly foreign to the effect to be accounted for; and it implies withal the severest reflection on the disciples of the benevolent Jesus. For it implies, that they were so unfeeling, so destitute of regard for their brethren the Jews, so unconcerned for the great cause for which they suffered, as to enjoy *rest* at a time when the whole country was involved in one scene of horror and devastation—to be *comforted* and *edified*, when men, women, and children lay on the ground with their breasts bare to receive the sword of the tyrant." Lard. Vol. I. p. 97.

The narrative of Josephus represents the Jewish believers in Rome, as innocent in general, but stigmatizes four of them, as wicked in every respect. According to Philo, the edict of Tiberius made a distinction, which unfortunately had not been made at first, between the innocent and the guilty, enjoining the magistrates of the provinces to protect the former, and to punish only the latter, who were few. This just distinction, is recognized by Paul, in that part of his letter to the christians in Rome, where he enforces the duty of obedience to the civil rulers. " These," Rom. xii. 3, " are not a terror to the *good* but to *evil* doers." The apostle Peter recognizes the same distinction. " Submit yourselves to governors as unto men that are sent by him, for the punishment of *evil* doers, and for the praise of them who do well."

2 Pet. ii. 13. Here then is a very remarkable circumstance, Paul writing in Greece, Peter in Rome or Judea, and Philo about the same time in Egypt, use the very same language; and that in circumstances, in which neither would or could have used it. Because so notoriously hostile were the magistrates in general to Christ and his followers that, when left to themselves, they were more disposed to punish the active and virtuous than the guilty among them. It is manifest, therefore, that the language of these three writers owes its coincidence to the edict of the emperor, which had been sent to, and made known in, all the provinces.

Josephus represents those of the Jews who enlisted as sent into the island of Sardinia. But Suetonius asserts, in more general terms, that they were sent into provinces of a severe climate. Some of them, no doubt, were conveyed to *Great Britain*, where at this time existed military stations, and to this island those victims of cruelty and injustice must have brought with them the name and doctrine of Christ. And this will account for the following passage of *Gildas*, which I extract from *Camden's Britannia*, Gough's edition, p. 50. "In the mean time," writes he, "the island exposed to the severest cold, and as it were in the extremity of the earth, out of the reach of the visible sun, was first, under *the reign*

of Tiberius, favoured with the true sun, shining not in the material firmament, but from the highest heavens, before all time, enlightening the world with his beams in his appointed time, i. e. Christ by his precepts." The most respectable and competent of the early fathers confidently affirm, that Great Britain was blessed with the gospel from the earliest period; and Philo, who witnessed its rapid and early diffusion, asserts, that it had then been conveyed through every part of the habitable globe, even in his days *.

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* Eusebius, D. E. lib. 3. c. 7. p. 113. Clemens Romanus Epist. p. 8. Tertullian contra Judæos, c. 7. Origen in Luc. hom. 6, and in Ezek. hom. 4.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS ILLUSTRATED FROM JOSEPHUS.

IF our reasoning, in the preceding Chapter, be just, Josephus is the historian of certain events which happened to the christian church in Rome. To this church the apostle Paul, some years afterwards, addressed the letter, called "Epistle to the Romans." This being the case, we might expect, that the facts which the Jewish historian has recorded should be alluded to, or implied in this address of the apostle. Nor can it be said, that it is unreasonable to expect allusions to events, in a letter which was written ten or fourteen years after they had taken place. For these events were important and interesting, and founded in sentiments of a permanent nature. The wicked Jew and his associates had sown the tares of heresy, which, growing up in the Roman church, required not only the pen, but even the presence of the apostle to extirpate them. The claims of Jesus appear to have made the strongest impression on the minds, not only of the Jews,

but of the other inhabitants of Rome; and St. Paul says, that before the converts had yet been instructed by any of the apostles, their faith was spoken of in all the world. Rom. i. 8.

The wicked Jew and his associates, who professed to teach the philosophy of Moses, were in the number of those false teachers, afterwards known under the name of *Gnostics*. Their system and character will be described in the sequel; and we shall have reason to conclude that, while they pretended to teach, their object was artfully to undermine, the gospel. Josephus represents them as guilty of adultery and of defrauding the temple; and the robberies, which the malice of Tacitus imputes to the Jews in general, ought in candour to have been limited to them and their followers. It will be pleasing to discover, that the language of St. Paul is in perfect unison with the representation of the Jewish historian. In the second chapter he thus accosts the very Jew stigmatized by Josephus. "Behold thou callest thyself a Jew, and reposest in the law, and gloriest in God, and knowest his will, and approvest the superior principles of the law; and thou professest to be a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes, as possessing the characters of knowledge and truth in the law; dost thou, then, who teachest another,

neglect to teach thyself? Dost thou, who preachest against stealing, steal thyself? Dost thou, who forbiddest adultery, commit adultery? Dost thou abhor idols, and yet profanely rob the temple? Dost thou glory in the law, yet by the transgression of the law, dishonour God?" Rom. ii. 17—24.

At the close of the epistle our author thus adds, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are making divisions, and occasioning reproaches, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learnt, and avoid them. For such men are not servants of our Lord Jesus Christ, but of their own belly, and by their specious oracles* and festivals are deceiving the hearts of the simple; (for your obedience is become known to all. I rejoice therefore in you on this account; but I wish you to be wise unto goodness and harmless unto evil) but the God of peace will quickly

* The Gnostics were distinguished by their pride and arrogance. They claimed to themselves the most lofty titles, while they branded the sincere and humble believers with contemptuous and ignominious terms. The language which the apostle uses in regard to this Jew, is very appropriate, because it is the language in which he and his brethren spoke of himself, calling himself a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of babes.

bruise Satan under your feet." Many important particulars are obviously contained in this paragraph, namely, that before the apostle wrote this epistle false teachers had risen in the Roman church, who disgraced it by their immoral and tumultuous conduct; that, while they pretended to be servants of the Lord Jesus, they aimed only at the gratifications of their own base passions;* that by violence and certain specious arts (namely, by oracles and festivals) they affected to deceive Satan or the world into a belief of the gospel, while, by these means, they only deceived the hearts of the simple. The history of Josephus supplies the best comment that can be offered in illustration of the above inferences. A Jew, of an infamous character, together with

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* The original is Δια της χρησολογιας και ευλογιας εξαπατωσι τας καρδιας των ακακων. The impostors styled the festival, which they celebrated in honour of Christ, ευλογια. Sacra cæna vocatur ευλογια, says Suicerus, in his Lexicon. See 1 Cor. x. 16. We shall hereafter shew that the deceivers endeavoured to impose on the Greeks and Romans by certain oracles of their own invention, which they imputed to the Sibyl, respecting Jesus Christ. This fiction they appear to have disguised under the term χρησολογια, a word which occurs in no other author; and the apostle no doubt uses it, because he knew the deceivers used it in Rome and other places to express their specious impostures.

some Egyptians like himself, affected to believe and to teach christianity, while by their behaviour they brought upon it the greatest disgrace. The Egyptians were noted for their devotion to festivals, which they celebrated frequently and with great pomp in honour of their gods. The disciples of Jesus too had a simple institution, which they frequented in honour of their master: and it was written of them, before they were yet debased by foreign luxury, that "they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." But the Egyptians, on receiving the faith, taught as it must as yet have been by men, who neither understood its doctrines nor had imbibed its spirit, carried with them, we may well suppose, into the christian church most of their former customs and habits. And among these were the feasts to which they were so fondly devoted, and which offered an easy coalition with the institution of the Lord's support. From this unhappy union the plain and simple supper of our Lord degenerated in some instances into a riotous banquet. These banquets were known in ancient times under the name of *agapæ*, or *love-feasts*, which were not, I think, institutions distinct from the eucharist, but the eucharist corrupted by pagan luxury.

Josephus has recorded one instance of the enormities committed on those occasions. Fulvia, a woman of rank, whose husband was in habits of friendship with the emperor, was brought over by these teachers to profess the new faith; and the very men who pretended to convert her, proved her disgrace and ruin. For by their solicitations she went into the temple by night, where after the festival was over, and the candles put out, she surrendered her chastity to a Roman knight, who lay concealed for her, but whom she supposed to be the god Anubis. This crime, when made known, roused the indignation of Tiberius, and was the immediate cause of the calamities which befel the Jews and Egyptians in Italy. With propriety, therefore, the apostle puts the question, "Dost thou glory in the law, and by the transgression of the law dishonour God? For the name of God is evil spoken of through you among the Gentiles*."

* The impostors, by corrupting the native purity of the gospel, greatly obstructed its divine influence; while their vices laid the foundation of those calumnies, which the enemies of Jesus indiscriminately extended to all his followers. To the unhappy tendency which the character of the false teachers had to retard christianity, the apostle alludes in the following verse: "And severe punishment is denounced from heaven against all ungodly and unrighteous men, *who hinder the truth by their wickedness.*" Rom. i. 17.

The impostors adopted the pernicious maxim of telling falsehoods to promote the truth. They forged certain oracles respecting Christ, which they ascribed to the Sibyl, under pretence *of deceiving Satan*, a phrase which, divested of its symbolical signification, simply meant, the leading men into a belief of the gospel, in consequence of evading, by false representations, those unreasonable objections which the mistaken notions, and the evil principles of the world, threw in the way of its progress. Now it is observable that, if we pass over the words in the parenthesis, and consider the subsequent with the preceding part of the sentence, this will appear to be the pretence for their specious impostures. "And by their oracles and festivals, they deceive the hearts of the simple—*but* the God of peace will quickly bruise Satan under your feet." As though the apostle had said, "These men propagate their falsehoods under the pretext of deceiving Satan, but in reality they deceive only those, who, unlike themselves, possess innocent and guileless hearts. And as to Satan, the great adversary that retards the gospel, the Almighty, instead of imposing upon him by lies, or opposing him by violence and contention, will speedily bruise him under your feet; and this he will do by means consistent with gentleness, peace, and truth." If we consider the tumults and distress,

which these impostors occasioned at Rome, the phrase *God of Peace*, which the apostle here uses, will appear to have a peculiar propriety. Our Lord, wishing to prevent his apostles from adopting the conduct, which he foresaw would be pursued by the Gnostics, among many other excellent directions, solemnly delivered to them the following: "Be ye wise as the serpent, and harmless as the dove." This maxim, though dictated in opposition to them, the deceivers perverted into a justification of their own falsehoods; interpreting it thus, and omitting the last clause. "As the serpent or Satan employed his wisdom to deceive the mother of mankind, so may you, after his example, employ the same means to deceive the serpent, and thus defeat him with his own weapons." In order to rectify this wicked perversion of his master's precept, St. Paul exhorts his brethren, "I wish you to be wise unto goodness, but unto evil to be harmless:" as though he had said, "My desire is, that the end you have in view should be ever laudable, and that you should pursue it by methods consistent with truth and virtue. It were better that you possess no wisdom at all, than that you pervert it to sinister purposes. In all that is evil, therefore, shew yourselves as though you were entirely destitute of sagacity and skill; but in whatever is virtuous and praiseworthy display all the know-

ledge, and all the prudence, which it is possible for man to acquire."

We have already seen that a belief, derived from the prophets, prevailed not only among the Jews, but among other nations, that some great prince would soon appear in the east, who, like the sun in its meridian, ascending the throne of universal empire, would by the lustre of his benign countenance disperse the shade of superstition and error, loosen the chains of slavery and oppression, and raise the human race to freedom, virtue, and happiness. In consequence partly of this expectation, the christian doctrine on its first promulgation in Rome, was embraced by multitudes of Jews, Egyptians, and Greeks. The dispute, which it occasioned, threw the city into confusion. The emperor, mistaking for a while the claims of the Messiah, and the nature of his religion, was filled with alarm; and in order to check its progress, he adopted every method, however cruel, which policy could suggest or power execute. Upon the converts he exercised unusual severities. Such of the Jewish youths as were capable of bearing arms, the senate pressed into the military service; punished with death those who had the magnanimity to refuse enlisting; and banished the rest into islands, the severity of whose climates was likely to prove fatal to their constitution. Nor was this all; that

he might suppress the first appearance of sedition, and keep the people, anxious to throw off the yoke of slavery, in subjection to his controul, Tiberius augmented the military forces in Italy, formed a camp at Rome, confined the prætorian guards, and extended to the provinces those salutary precautions which he exercised with great vigilance in the capital. The measures for keeping the nations in bondage could not have been relaxed by the immediate successors of Tiberius.

The events above noticed are thus recognised in the following passage of the apostle, which, from its hitherto impenetrable obscurity, has baffled the efforts of criticism satisfactorily to explain it. "The creation, with heartfelt desire, expects the appearance of the sons of God (for the creation is subject to vanity, not of its own accord, but because of the subjector), in hopes that the creation itself shall be delivered from corruptible slavery into the glorious freedom of the children of God," viii. 19—22. Here it is asserted, that the creation, namely, the civilized part of mankind, earnestly expected the sons of God, or, in other words, *the Messiah*, and *his happy subjects*, to make their appearance; that they cherished this expectation in the hope of partaking in the blessings and privileges of his government, but were prevented from

attaining this heartfelt desire by the *subjector*, that is, the *existing power*. The paragraph may be thus paraphrased: "The nations of the world, subjugated at present to a vain, false, and a debasing system of superstition and despotism, cherish in their hearts, though they dare not shew it in their words and actions, the fond hope of being emancipated under the auspices of the expected prince, and of sharing with his own subjects the blessings of his kingdom."

The expectation, which the creation cherished, and of which the apostle here speaks, was founded upon the erroneous notions, universally prevalent in early times, that the looked for Redeemer would be literally a king, and that his second appearance, to establish a boundless and everlasting kingdom on the earth, was at hand. These notions our author, in the succeeding verses, proceeds to rectify. But a judicious regard to the prejudices of his readers obliged him to touch them, like painful wounds, with a tender hand. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth, and is in labour until now; and not only the creation, but we, who have received the first fruits of the spirit, even we, I say, groan within ourselves, expecting our adoption to be a deliverance of the body:" which is to this effect, "Not only do the Jews and Gentiles indulge the mistaken expectation of a corporeal emancipation, of an earthly deliver-

ance under the Messiah; but the apostles themselves, to whom the Holy Spirit has been communicated, in order to lead them into the truth---into a knowledge of the true nature of that redemption which Christ confers upon his faithful followers---even the apostles, I say, have indulged the same fond, but mistaken idea." Having made this remark, he intimates, that the salvation conferred by Jesus, does not respect the present, but the future world, and is an object of *hope*, not of sight, verses 24, 25.

The converts in Rome, misled by mistaken views of the new faith, and actuated by a deep hatred of tyranny, and an ardent love of liberty, opposed the abuses of the Roman government, which was rendered very oppressive by the wicked administration of Sejanus. The opposition, however just, brought upon them the hatred of that minister. In order to be revenged upon a people, whom he at once hated and feared, he presented to the senate various heavy charges against them. The crimes of which a few comparatively were guilty, he extended to the whole body of the Jewish and Egyptian converts; and he employed with success his influence with the emperor and senate to have them disgraced and punished. The opposition made to the followers of Jesus by the government, and the accusations laid to their charge, are facts to which the apostle ad-

verts in the following verse. "What then shall we say to these things! if God be for us, who shall be against us? Shall any bring accusation against the chosen of God? God acquitteth them. Doth any condemn them? Christ hath died, or rather he is risen, and is standing at the right hand of God pleading in our behalf*." 31---35.

Tiberius, in order to separate the converts from their allegiance to the new prince, under whose banners they had lately enlisted, banished some into remote islands; while those who were of suitable age, he forced into the military service. On these measures the apostle must have had his eye, when he triumphantly put the question, *Who*

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* The terms to *accuse, acquit, condemn,* &c. here used, are taken from the forms of justice. The writer had his mind now fixed on the Roman senate, where false charges were made against the new converts, and this is the source whence he copied his expressions. And he proceeds to speak of Christ under allusion to an advocate or counsellor, who when thrown to the ground, again rises up, pleads the cause, and maintains the innocence, of those who believed in him. Doth any condemn them? "Christ hath died or rather he is risen, and is standing at the right hand of God pleading in our behalf." The whole sentence is figurative, as is evident from the clause, "standing at the right hand of God." The mediatorial character, which is here ascribed to Christ, is therefore to be interpreted not in a literal sense, but with that latitude which is due to a highly metaphorical language.

shall separate us from the love of Christ? He then enumerates the several hardships, which they underwent, in consequence of those measures, and expresses his confidence, that the love of their master would enable them to triumph over their difficulties. "Shall tribulation or oppression, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword (that is the civil power), nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

The Jewish youths, who refused entering into the army conformably to the decree of the senate, were put to death; the greatest part having determined, in order to preserve their laws inviolate, to submit to this fate rather than become soldiers. On this determination turns the propriety of the following words, which the writer has selected from Ps. xliv. 22. *For thy sake we are killed all the day long;* which means, "We are destroyed, not because we are guilty of any crimes, but because of the attachment we shew to the cause of Christ. We are assassinated too, not secretly and by night, but are butchered like flocks of sheep in the face of day; and to this merciless treatment we are exposed from morning to evening." While the undisguised enemies of the gospel on one hand used open violence to withdraw the true believers from the faith, the gnostic impostors, on the other hand,

consisting of the wicked Jew, the Samaritan Simon, and some Egyptian priests, employed less hostile, but more dangerous means, to answer this end. In opposition to the man Jesus, they preached a Christ from heaven, invested with powers and principalities, and accompanied with angels. They affected, moreover, to reveal an unknown god superior to the Creator, the God of Israel, whom they called *Hypsoma*, *Bathos* or *Bythos**. By such impious fictions, those enemies of the truth sought to undermine the christian cause. The apostle next directs his attention to the deceivers, as in fact uniting with the

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* See Irenæus, p. 7. where they give their supreme God the name of *Bythos*. In the Excerpta of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, he is styled *Bathos*, ἡ σιγη μητηρ ουσα των παντων προβληθεντων ὑπο του Βαθους. This Bathos they represented as higher than the Creator,—ὑψηλοτερον τι και μειζον του τον ουρανον και γην και παντα τα εν αυτοις πεποιηκοτος θεου. Conformably to this notion, the apostle in the text denominates this fancied divinity ὑψωμα. The same author, 1 Tim. i. 3. calls their fictions, *fables of endless genealogies;* and the primary links in the chain were Βυθος, Νους, Λογος, Φρονησις, Σοφια, Δυναμις, Αρχαι, Αγγελοι. See Epiphan. p. 69. That the apostle used these abstract ideas, conformably to the gnostics, in an allegorical sense, is evident from his adding, "Nor any other *being*." It follows then that the things going before were either *beings*, or supposed to be beings: and the impostors represent them as such.

advocates of despotism and persecution, in their endeavours to separate the true believers from Christ. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor *angels*, nor *principalities*, nor *powers*, nor things present, nor things to come, nor *Hypsoma*, nor *Bathos*, nor any other *being*, will be able to separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The chief pretence which the gnostics had for attempting to alienate the affections of his people from the benevolent Creator of the universe, was the *malevolence* imputed to him, and the *sufferings* of his worshippers. These sufferings they alleged, not without plausibility, as a proof of his *cruelty*. On this occasion, and indeed in all other places where St. Paul notices the persecution of the christians, he impresses his hearers in the strongest terms with the *benevolence* of their maligned father. "He who spared not his own son, but gave him up for us all; how will he not also with him freely give us all things.——In all these things we are more than conquerors, *through him that loved us*——For I am persuaded that neither death nor life will be able to separate us *from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord*."

The calamities, which their profession entailed on the new converts, and the ignominy attached to the name of Jesus, were the chief circum-

stances that deterred the Jewish nation, more generally, from embracing him as the Messiah. Our apostle having his ideas now fixed on these causes, passes over to the effect; and, in a language highly characteristic of the goodness and tenderness of his heart, expresses his deep felt sorrow for the perverseness of his countrymen in rejecting their Saviour. "I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me testimony in the holy spirit, that I have great grief, and continual sorrow of heart; for I too would have gloried in being separated by Christ, for my brethren*, my kinsmen, according to the

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* The passage stands thus in the original, Ηυχομην γαρ αυτος εγω αναθεμα απο του χριστου υπερ των αδελφων μου κ. τ. λ. which is thus preposterously rendered in the common version, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren." Wakefield has given another very different translation of the passage, "I have great grief and continual sorrow of heart (for I also was *once* an alien from Christ) on account of my brethren." In his notes the translator briefly adds, "I see no method of solving the difficulty in this verse, which has so exercised the learning and ingenuity of commentators, but by the ευχομαι ειναι of Homer. *I profess myself to be.* This solution makes the passage rational and plain." This, however, appears to me a solution erroneous and absurd; first, because the sense here ascribed to ευχομαι, though it well suits *a heathen general*, is by no means suitable to the apostle Paul; nor has the word such

flesh, who are Israelites, whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the religious service, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ according to the flesh; whose is the God that is over all, to be blessed for ever." ix. 1—6.

It was known in Rome, as well as in other

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a sense in any other place of the christian, or of the Jewish scriptures; because, secondly, such is the usage of the Greek language, that a verb occurring in the imperfect tense is understood to extend its meaning to the present, unless it be limited by another past verb. Thus ηυχομην implies not only that the apostle *once wished*, but still *continued* to wish, to be an alien from Christ, a wish at once absurd and impious. In this respect the genius of our tongue exactly accords with that of the Greek; and so sensible was Wakefield of this circumstance, that in his version he limits the verb by the numeral *once*, which has nothing corresponding to it in the original.

The term αναθεμα originally meant *a holy offering*, or a thing separated from profane use, and appropriated to God. This signification it often bears in the *Septuagint*, where St. Paul was far more likely to learn its use than in Homer. Thus in Jos. vi. 18, 19, αναθεμα is described to be ἅγιον τῳ κυριῳ, and in Leviticus, xxvi. 29, we meet with the word in a similar acceptation. After this it is of little consequence to add, that Philo, and the Greek fathers sometimes have used the word in this sense, see *Suicerus*. The apostle, by this term, intimates his apprehension that, sooner or later, he was to be offered a sacrifice for the cause in which he was engaged; and that he would have been glad to fall a victim for the Jews as well as for the Gentiles.

places, that while the other apostles were appointed to convert the circumcised, Paul was separated by Christ to be the apostle of the Gentiles. In the former part of this epistle, he had been maintaining the privileges of the pagan believers, against the encroachments of the judaizing zealots. It was therefore natural for such of the Gentiles as had united with the Roman church, to conclude, that their apostle, as the advocate of the heathen, was become indifferent, if not averse to his kinsmen, the Jews. This inference St. Paul was most anxious to preclude; and he expresses the most tender solicitudes for those whom he appeared to have abandoned, and whose exclusive claims he resists. "Think not that, because I am your apostle, and defend your cause, I am indifferent to my countrymen. No, I still feel the most affectionate zeal for their salvation. I should have gloried to have been set apart by our divine Master, as is the case with others of the apostles, to convert them: and in the execution of this trust, I should be equally zealous and faithful, as I now am in converting the world. I shall, I know, sacrifice my life in the service of the Gentiles; and the same sacrifice I should cheerfully make in behalf of the Jews. They have every claim on my regard: they are united to me by the ties of country and of blood, and to them naturally belong all

the privileges, which are now proclaimed to the Gentile world."

The gnostic impostors maintained, that the God over all, or the supreme God, did not belong to the Jews, but to them, they having revealed him; while they blasphemed the God of Israel, as an evil inferior being. To this impious notion, the apostle alludes, when he says, "Whose is the God that is over all, blessed for ever." This meaning is obtained by the transposition of a single letter in the original. Schlichtingius was the critic who first conjectured this reading; and the reference which the apostle, in the whole of the context, has to the gnostic heresy, powerfully recommends its propriety and truth*.

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* The common text is ὁ ων επι παντων θεος, which by transposing the two first words becomes ὢν ὁ επι παντων θεος. That this last is the true reading, is demonstrable from the following reasons:—1. This is a phrase, which all ancient writers, Christian as well as Jewish, have used in regard to the Father, who is God over all. 2. The sentiments of the men, whom the apostle had before him, render this reading at once appropriate and even necessary; as they blasphemed the God of Israel, and denied him to be the God over all. 3. Had the original been in ancient times, what it is now found to be, the early fathers would have cited this passage for the divinity of Christ: but neither Justin, I believe, nor Irenæus, or Tertullian, nor Origen, has quoted it with this view, though they have seized with avi-

In order to comprehend the meaning of what follows, it is necessary to remember, that the false teachers, whom the writer had before his eyes, were for the most part *Egyptians;* and that a multitude of this nation had united with the Jews at least in a nominal belief of the gospel. These pretended to worship a God superior to Jehovah: they insisted too, it is probable, on the nullity of the promise made to Abraham, and afterwards repeated to Isaac and Jacob, and in proof of this, pointed to the degraded and dispersed condition of their descendants. Now the apostle, that he might obviate the hasty conclusion, thus drawn from the infidelity and consequent degradation of his countrymen, represents the promise as made to those who were the seed of Abraham in a metaphorical, not a literal sense. "Not that by any means the word of God hath failed, (the divine word hath by no means been nullified in the present unbelief of the Jews): for all the posterity of Israel are not true

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dity and violence every passage in the N. T. which could be perverted for that purpose. This circumstance, then, is a fair presumption, that the reading of the present Greek text was not that of their copies. *See Taylor on the Romans,* who, though *orthodox,* argues for the transposition here insisted upon, as supplying an important and necessary link in the chain of the apostle's argument.

Israelites, nor all Abraham's offspring children of promise. But saith the Scripture, The posterity of Isaac shall be the children; that is, the children of the flesh are not God's children; but the children of the promise are counted his children." Verses 6, 7, 8.

The circumstance, he next insinuates, of the promise being unfulfilled, so far from proving its invalidity, was presignified by the very late period of Sarah's life, and superannuated state, when she bore the child, in whose birth the promise was in part realized; "For this is the word of promise, According *to this time* (that is, *this late time)* will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." Esau and Jacob were pronounced by the divine oracle, while yet unborn, (Gen. xxv. 23.) to be the representatives of *two great nations*, namely, of the Israelites and of the Egytians. As the two former had one father, so the latter, however envious of each other, sustained the same relation towards God. Now, in order to allay the animosities of the Jewish and Egyptian converts, and to awaken in their bosoms the sentiments of brotherly love, the apostle admonishes them of their descent from a common parent. "Rebecca had also conceived by one." The meekness and address of our author presents us with a similar instance in Acts xvii. 27, where he reminds the philosophers of Athens, who par-

took of the general hatred against the Jews, that all the human race were the offspring of the same father.

Esau, the elder brother, forfeited his birthright, and became a servant to Jacob, the younger. This representation, considered in reference to the people, whom they typified, signifies, that the Egyptians, who flourished in power and opulence at a time, when the Israelites laboured in a poor and enslaved condition, would sink in obscurity and oppression; while those, whom they held in slavery, would rise to prosperity and eminence, under the auspices of Jehovah. "As it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau have I hated." That is to say, the nation whom the former represents, I have crowned with prosperity and happiness: while that denoted by the latter, I have depressed in bondage and misery. The circumstance of the two nations having been thus preordained by Providence, and presignified in the fate of their respective representatives, before they were yet in existence, was well adapted to preclude the Egyptians, on one hand, from boasting in their superior antiquity, and the Jews, on the other, from triumphing in their subsequent ascendancy over their unfeeling oppressors. And this was the laudable object which St. Paul had in the following verse. "For before their birth, when they had done nothing,

neither good or evil, that God's determined choice (not from work, but from the will of him that calleth) might remain; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger."

The Egyptianizing teachers, though they might not admit the justice of this representation, would not fail to deduce from it an additional argument for that capriciousness and injustice, which they ascribed to the God of Israel. The apostle anticipates the impious inference, by putting the question, "What shall we say then, Is there unrighteousness with God? By no means: for he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." 14, 15. By this the apostle inculcates, in opposition to the blasphemers, that *mercy* and *compassion* are the leading features in the character of God; and that he exercises these attributes towards his human offspring, not indeed according to the narrow and partial views of any individual or nation, however wise and powerful, but according to the dictates of his own unerring wisdom and boundless love. He then ascribed the reward, proposed in the gospel, to the benevolence of God, and not to any qualifications in the candidates, which might merit his favour. "The prize then is not from him who runs, nor from him who has the will to run, but from God who gives it in mercy."

This right of the supreme Being to confer favour on whomsoever he pleased, Paul, with great skill and delicacy, illustrates by an example taken from the Mosaic history, which was at once calculated to humble the pride of the Egyptian impostors, and to evince the superiority of the God of Israel over the fancied supreme divinity, which they affected to worship: "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, for this very purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth; so that he hath mercy, where he chooseth, and hardeneth where he chooseth." It is here worthy of observation, that while the writer so repeatedly represents the Almighty as exercising mercy, he instances his *severity* only in *hardening* the heart of Pharaoh, and not in destroying him: and he is careful to state the design, which God had in thus treating the Egyptian monarch. This treatment did not proceed from *cruelty*, *caprice*, or *ill-will* towards the sufferer, but from a regard to the advantages which all mankind would derive, in becoming acquainted with the name and character of Jehovah, "That I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

The assertion, that the Creator acts as it pleaseth

him, and that none can counteract the execution of his will, furnished the blasphemers with another objection: "Why doth he still find fault? Who hath opposed his will?" These questions, being put with an insolence that criminated the divine conduct; and put too by men, who were disqualified by their ignorance and depravity from enquiring with candour and meekness into the reasonableness of God's dealings with mankind, the apostle, instead of answering, repels, by holding up the uncontroulable right, which the Deity has to dispose of, as it pleaseth him, the creatures of his hands: "Nay, O man, who art thou that disputest with God? Shall the work say to the workman, Why didst thou make me thus? Hath not the potter such power over the clay, as to make out of the same lump one vessel for honourable uses, and another for dishonourable?" The promptitude and fertility of our author's imagination are here worthy of notice. His mind was now, for some time, fixed upon that part of the Mosaic history, which represents the Israelites as compelled by the task-masters of Pharaoh to work in mortar and brick. Exod. i. 24. Hence he exhibits the Egyptian oppressors in the humble image of *earthen vessels* wrought for menial purposes, and their destruction in the Red Sea, under an allusion to the same vessels,

dashed on the ground, and broken to pieces, after the purposes for which they were made, had been answered; while the Israelites, whom the Almighty delivered out of Egypt, he likens to utensils richly decorated, and wrought for honourable purposes. "What if God, wishing to display his anger, and to make known his power, produced, in much patience, vessels of anger, fitted only for destruction, and exhibited his riches and glory upon vessels of mercy, which he had prepared for honourable purposes?" Which question is to this effect; "What though the Sovereign Disposer of all things punished with exemplary severity, a people, towards whom he had exercised great forbearance, and whom their vices had disqualified for the honour of his patronage and friendship; on the contrary, what if, by a splendid display of power, he rescued the Jewish nation from bondage, and conferred upon them the most honourable distinctions, as his chosen people, ought he on this account to be charged with cruelty, caprice, and partiality?" To prevent, however, the injurious conclusion that he regarded with partial fondness the descendants of Abraham, to the exclusion of other nations, the writer immediately subjoins that the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, are invited, and indeed preordained to participate in the blessings of the

gospel; and this important point he corroborates by appealing to the Jewish prophets. See the following verses.

I have given a general explanation of this difficult and long controverted chapter, because it is founded upon two facts hitherto unobserved; namely, that a number of the Egyptians had united with the christian church at Rome; and that the apostle is reasoning against certain impostors of that nation who blasphemed, as evil, the God of the Jews. If this explanation be just, it is evident, that the doctrines of predestination, of election, and of reprobation, deduced chiefly from this passage by Calvin and his followers, fall to the ground, and owe their very origin to those Egyptian teachers, whose impious notions of God the apostle endeavoured to resist.

The Jews in Rome and in other places, supposing the Messiah would be a temporal prince, naturally concluded, that a belief in Christ was inconsistent with civil obedience to Cæsar. This opinion led some of them improperly to interfere with the existing government, and exposed them all to calumny and persecution. This was a very dangerous error, and the mischiefs, which it had already produced, and was likely still farther to produce, induced the apostle to lay before the church some wise and salutary admonitions, respecting the conduct they should pursue in regard

to the Roman government. "Let every soul submit itself to powers in authority: for as there is no power but from God, these powers are appointed by God. Whosoever therefore setteth himself against the power, opposeth the appointment of God; and such opposers will bring punishment upon themselves." Chap. xiii. 1.

The mistaken views of the Jews, and the measures which had been taken by the senate at the instigation of Sejanus, form the only clue to the true intent of the preceding paragraph. It may be paraphrased in the following manner: "Conceiving the kingdom of the Messiah alone to be of divine appointment, some of you oppose the established government, disturb the public peace, and interrupt the administration of justice. But the supposition is as mistaken as it is pernicious. All power, to whatever hands entrusted, is communicated by the disposer of all events for the purpose of doing good; and this end it shall, under his providence, essentially accomplish. And though pride, ambition, and avarice, may abuse the authority invested in them for the attainment of their respective object, yet this very abuse Infinite Wisdom will overrule, and in the end render subservient to the introduction and establishment of that glorious liberty which awaits the children of God. Resist not therefore by violence, or any other unlawful means, those who

bear the sword of justice; but rather submit to their decisions, as in effect the decisions of an all-wise and good providence." Such is the signification of a passage perverted by tyranny and priestcraft into an engine which, for many ages, irresistibly held mankind in oppression, ignorance, and superstition*.

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* Some excellent remarks on this much perverted passage may be seen in Paley's Moral Philosophy, Vol. II. chap. 4. and in Mr. Hall's Answer to Clayton, section 3.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOSEPHUS IN FAVOUR OF JESUS CHRIST.

No portion of ancient records, since the revival of learning, has so much engaged the attention, or for a time so widely divided the opinion of learned men, as the celebrated passage, found in the *Jewish Antiquities*, concerning Jesus Christ. During a whole century it has been the subject of much dispute among the critics, Catholic and Protestant, in every country throughout Christendom; till at length those who agreed in nothing else, came to agree in this, that the passage is the forgery of some Christian of the third century: nor, perhaps, does there exist a learned man of any estimation in Europe, who thinks it the production of the great Josephus. The passage is to this effect.

"And about this time existed Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he might be called a man: for he was the author of wonderful works, and the teacher of such men as embrace the truth with delight. He united to himself many Jews, and

many among the Gentiles. This was the Christ: and those, who from the first had been attached to him, continued their attachment, though he was condemned by our great men, and crucified by Pilate. For he appeared to them alive again the third day: and these, with innumerable other marvellous things concerning him, being foretold by the divine prophets. And the race, who from him still call themselves christians, have not fallen away."*

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* Γινεται δε κατα τουτον τον χρονον Ιησους, σοφος ανηρ, ειγε ανδρα αυτον λεγειν χρη. ην γαρ παραδοξων εργων ποιητης, διδασκαλος ανθρωπων των ηδονη ταληθη δεχομενων· και πολλους μεν Ιουδαιους, πολλους δε και του Ελληνικου επηγαγετο. ὁ Χριστος ὁυτος ην. και αυτον ενδειξει των πρωτων ανδρων παρ ἡμιν, σαυρῳ επι τετιμηκοτος Πιλατου, ουκ επαυσαντο ὁιγε πρωτον αυτον αγαπησαντες. εφανη γαρ αυτοις τριτην εχων ἡμεραν παλιν ζων, των θειων προφητων ταυτα τε και αλλα μυρια θαυμασια περι αυτου ειρηκοτων. εις ετι νυν των Χριστιανων απο τουδε ωνομασμενων ουκ επελιπε το φυλον. A. J. lib. 18. c. 3. 3.

I shall here quote a few instances, to shew in what manner the learned have spoken of this passage. "We conclude," says Warburton, Div. Leg. vol. i. p. 295, "that the passage where Josephus, who was as much a Jew as the religion of Moses could make him, is made to acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, is a rank forgery, and a very stupid

The arguments, which have led learned men to reject this passage as a forgery, are principally the two following.—No ecclesiastical writer before Eusebius, in the third century, has taken any notice of it. Justin Martyr, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, have passed by it in silence, which they would not have done, if a testimony so decisive in favour of Jesus Christ existed in the works of Josephus in their days.—The sentiments contained in it, are the sentiments of a

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one too." Dr. Priestley says, *Early Opin.* vol. i. p. 109. "The famous passage in Josephus concerning Christ, is not a more evident interpolation, than many in these epistles of Ignatius." The judgment of Mr. Gibbon is particularly worthy of notice: "The passage concerning Jesus Christ," writes he, vol. ii. c. 16. "which was inserted in the text of Josephus, between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius, may furnish an example of no vulgar forgery. The accomplishment of the prophecies, the virtues, the miracles of Jesus are distinctly related. Josephus acknowledges that he was the Messiah, and hesitates whether he should call him a man. If any doubt can still remain concerning this celebrated passage, the reader may examine the pointed objections of Le Febre, and the masterly reply of an anonymous critic, whom I believe to have been the learned Abbe de Longuerue." Daubuz has written a very learned treatise to prove the genuineness of the passage; which, with the letters that passed between the learned on this subject, is annexed to the second volume of Josephus, Havercamp's edition.

christian, which Josephus was not: therefore such a paragraph could not have come from his pen.

Lardner is the principal person in our own country, who has enforced these objections; and to his authority it is chiefly owing, that the passage is given up as a forgery.* The time, however, is at length arrived to reclaim it, as the genuine production of the Jewish historian, and to place its authenticity beyond the reach of contradiction till the end of time. It is then granted, that Justin, Origen, &c. have not cited the passage concerning Christ. But did not these fathers know, that Philo and Josephus are the historians and apologists of all the followers of Jesus under the name of Esseans? And have they made use of the authority of Josephus in regard to these? They certainly have not; nor have they even mentioned him as a christian writer. If then they passed over in silence the writings of this great man, in regard to *all* the disciples of Christ, is it to be wondered at, that they should not have noticed his testimony to Christ himself? Indeed, the Christian fathers during the three first centuries looked upon the writings of Josephus with the greatest dread and

* Lardner's Works, vol. vii. p. 120.

aversion; and they would have been glad, if possible, to have them buried in eternal oblivion. The reason of their dread and aversion will appear hereafter.

Josephus had very different notions of christianity from the Greek and Latin fathers; believing in the gospel as it was delivered to the saints, he laid open the sources of its corruptions, and held up to public infamy the base authors of those corruptions. The early christian writers perfectly comprehended his character and language; while the prejudices of education have rendered the moderns insensible to both.

A work, professedly christian, was written by Josephus in his later days, when he had every motive to be full and explicit on the subject of christianity. Concerning this book, Photius has the following remark: "Of the creation of the world, he gives but a summary account. But respecting Christ, he (namely, Josephus) speaks very conformably to our theology. He gives him that very name, and unexceptionably describes his incomprehensible descent from the Father. This may perhaps lead some to doubt, that the book came from the hand of Josephus."* In this

* Διεξεισι και περι της κοσμογονιας κεφαλιωδως· περι μεν του Χριστου, του αληθινου Θεου ἡμων, ὡς εγγιστα

passage two things are clearly implied: first, that Josephus in ancient time was known to be a believer in Jesus; because a book, inculcating the truth of christianity, went under his name, and was generally supposed to be his: secondly, it was apprehended, that he was not an *orthodox* christian; because this book, as being very nearly orthodox, could not, it was supposed, come from his pen.

Now, Photius was in the number of those who thought, that a work very nearly orthodox could hardly be the production of Josephus. He was therefore in the number of those who knew that Josephus was indeed a *christian*, but not an *orthodox* christian. This conclusion is demonstrable from other premises. This learned man was fully aware, that Philo and Josephus have written respecting the Jewish believers, under the titles of *Esseans* and *Theraputæ;* and he asserts, and asserts with truth, that the method of allegorizing the Jewish scriptures, adopted by Origen and other later christian writers, was borrowed from the Esseans in Egypt. Accordingly, Photius was aware, that Philo and Josephus were christian historians and apologists; and yet he is

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θεολογει κλησιν τε αυτην αναφθεγγομενος, και την εκ πατρος αφραστον γενεσιν ἀμεμπτως αναγραφων.

profoundly silent respecting the testimony which Josephus bears to Jesus Christ.

From this silence Dr. Lardner argues, that the disputed paragraph was wanting in the copies of Josephus, which were seen by Photius in the ninth century. But this conclusion, so far from being warranted, is the very reverse of what should be drawn. This passage had been quoted by all ecclesiastical writers, from Eusebius down to the ninth century: and if, while reading it in those writers, Photius did not find it in his own copy or copies, he would not have failed to make some such observation as the following: "The passage concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, cited from Josephus by Eusebius and others, is not in those copies which are in my possession." Moreover, he would have added, what indeed would be surprising, and even incredible, that Josephus, the Jewish historian, though he has given a full account of the Jewish believers, and mentioned James and John the Baptist by name, has taken no notice of Christ himself. And as Photius has made no observation of this kind, it is certain that he could not have made it with truth; the paragraph actually existing in the copies which he possessed. But this reasoning, on which no inconsiderable stress might be laid, in the absence of more conclusive matter, is superseded by the answer I am going to give to the second

objection, which is—That the controverted paragraph, as containing the sentiments of a christian, could never have come from the pen of Josephus.

Josephus wrote his Antiquities at the advice, and with the encouragement, of a distinguished believer in Christ; and for those of the heathens who were eager to learn the Jewish institutions, that is, of the heathen converts. Having this end in view, he was necessarily led in some part or other of the work to speak of Christ himself, especially as the calumnies of his enemies rendered a testimony to the purity of his character and the truth of his doctrine indispensably necessary.

Josephus was a believer in Christ: he considered his gospel as the Jewish religion refined and perfected, and calls it not unfrequently the *philosophy* of Moses, or the *wisdom* of his laws.

Josephus is the historian—he is also the apologist, of the Jewish and Gentile believers: he has described their customs and opinions, and placed their virtues in the fairest light, in spite of the calumnies with which they were assailed. A believer in the gospel would not have left unnoticed the finisher of his faith, throughout a voluminous work, intended to support and promote his cause: a defender of the christians would not

have left their innocent and virtuous chief without defence.

The objections made against the disputed passage would never have been made, had these things been known; they originated in misconception; and the real character and views of Josephus being at length brought to light, they fall, like a dead weight, to the ground; and there they will remain, a monument of the temerity and mistaken views of those who made them.

Nor should I omit to mention, that the style of the passage is in exact unison with the very peculiar style of Josephus: the same conciseness and comprehension, the same dry and unvarnished detail of facts distinguish it, which distinguish all his other works. Nor can any suspicion arise against its genuineness from the want of authentic evidence. The same historical testimony authenticates it, which authenticates all the works of Josephus; no manuscript, no version, no copy being ever known to exist, without this celebrated paragraph.

This important paragraph unites in a remarkable manner the opposite qualities of brevity and fulness. In a few sentences Josephus has brought together the leading articles of faith contained in the four gospels, and asserts them to be true. Jesus was a wise man, and the au-

thor of wonderful works. This same Jesus is the Christ. The rulers condemned, and Pilate crucified him. Nevertheless, his followers still adhered to him; for he appeared to them again alive the third day, the prophets having foretold this and a thousand other things respecting him. In the midst of his sufferings and disgrace, he draws to himself many Jews and many of the Gentiles. To these he taught the truth: and the men who saw his works, heard his words, and recorded them in the memoirs of his public life, were such as took pleasure only in the truth. These great facts, thus explicitly attested by the Jewish historian, are the chief points on which the apostles insisted in preaching the gospel; and they form the peculiar and essential doctrines of christianity.

A testimony like this was imperiously demanded by the circumstances, in which the author wrote his Antiquities; and it is to be deemed doubly important, from the calumnies and objections which he intended to meet. Josephus has related the grounds of these calumnies; and that he might directly meet them, he places at the head of them the account which he gives of Christ.

It was very natural for the people of Rome to form their opinion of Christ and his apostles, from the character of some men who taught his

religion in that city. And as these were devoted to magic, and disgraced by immoralities and falsehoods, the enemies of christianity believed, or affected to believe, that its founder, and his immediate followers in Judea, were men of the same description. This was the chief circumstance, which appears to have led Josephus to insert in the Jewish Antiquities his testimony in favour of Christ: and that he might directly meet, and effectually repel, the charge of being magicians and impostors, hence urged again our Lord and his faithful disciples, he draws in a few words the character of these, and contrasts it with the conduct of those deceivers, who disgraced his name and his religion in Rome.—"And about this time existed Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he might be called a man: for he was the author of wonderful works, and the teacher of such men as delight in the truth.—A Jew resided at Rome, who having been accused of transgressing the laws of Moses, fled from his country, to avoid the punishment due to his crimes. In every respect he was a wicked man. During his residence at Rome, he professed to unfold the wisdom of the Mosaic laws, in conjunction with three men, who in every view resembled himself," &c.

Justin Martyr, in his first Apology, addressed to the emperor and senate, has the following

passage, which has occasioned great perplexity to modern critics.—" Simon, a Samaritan from the village of Gitton, in the reign of Claudius, by means of demons working in him, is in your royal city deemed a god, and is honoured as such with a statue from you, which statue had been raised by the river Tiber, between the two bridges, having upon it this inscription in Latin, 'Simoni Deo Sancto'." P. 38. ed. Thirl.

On this passage Middleton, a fine writer, but a superficial enquirer, thus remarks: "It is manifest, beyond all reasonable doubt, that Justin was led here into a gross blunder, by his usual want of judgment, and his ignorance of Roman affairs: and his preconceived notions of fabulous stories, which past current about this Simon amongst the first christians: for the statue and inscription, to which he appeals, were not dedicated to his countryman Simon Magus, of whose deification there is not the least hint in any Roman writer, but to a Sabine deity of ancient worship in Rome, and of similar name, *Semoni Sanco*, frequently mentioned by the old writers, as the inscription itself, dug up about two centuries ago from the ruins of that very place, which Justin describes, has clearly demonstrated."

The true state of this matter seems to be the following. Among those idols which superstition had created in Rome, there were those dedicated

to *Semo Sanco*, the Sabine deity above mentioned. Simon, during his residence in that city, becoming acquainted with these idols, pretended, from the similarity of that name to his own, that he was the divinity meant by it. Of this pretension no proof was necessary with the enemies of the gospel: for the deep-rooted malice, which the Romans cherished towards the Jews in general, and towards Jesus and his disciples in particular, induced them to favour and to support every impostor who partook of their malice and hatred, and who was likely to be instrumental in checking the progress of the new faith. They therefore suffered either new statues, or some of the old statues, to be erected with the inscription, not as before of *Semoni Sanco*, but of *Simoni Deo Sancto*. The statue dug up since was doubtless one of the original idols dedicated to the Sabine deity, while that which the Roman senate, from envy and malice towards Christ, had raised in honour of Simon, has been lost in the common ruins. The error, therefore, lies with Middleton, and others of the same stamp, and not with Justin Martyr, who knew much more of the subject than they did. A few observations will, it is presumed, be sufficient to substantiate the truth of this statement.

1. The blunder here imputed to Justin, by men whose writings are full of blunders, is in the

highest degree improbable. The transaction, which he has recorded, had taken place more than fifty years before the time in which he wrote. It was also a transaction of great notoriety, and of no inconsiderable importance, as connected with the affairs of the christians. It must, therefore, have been a subject of frequent conversation with the believers in Rome and in Samaria, especially as they had to dispute with the followers and advocates of Simon, who were very numerous in that age. Justin, during the years he professed christianity, had frequent opportunities personally to witness the fact at Rome; and he must have conversed with many friends and adversaries, who would have set him right, had he been mistaken. Besides, he asserts the fact in the face of the emperor and senate: nor would he have exposed himself and his cause to ridicule and contempt, unless he felt fully convinced that it was incontrovertible.

2. Simon was a shameless and profligate impostor; and it is a fact, that wherever he went he pretended to be a god. His language to his followers was, "I can be adored as a god, and have divine honours bestowed upon me, so that men shall make me a statue, and shall worship and adore me as a god." To his impious pretensions, in this respect, we have the most authentic testimony; since we read in the Acts, that in

Samaria he astonished the people by his magical artifices, and professed to be the great power of God. It cannot appear improbable, that he held out the same profession in Rome, where he exercised the same wicked arts; nor is it less probable, that the enemies of the gospel should avail themselves of his pretensions, in order to ridicule or to defeat the claims of Jesus. Philo has noticed the honours bestowed by the people of Alexandria on Apelles, Helicon, and others, merely because these last distinguished themselves in opposition to the advocates of the faith; nor can we reasonably doubt, that similar opponents, however low in a political, or base in a moral view, met with the same support and encouragement in the metropolis of the empire.

The similarity of *Semon* to *Simon* was a lucky coincidence: and his artifice in claiming a name which was so like his own, is well illustrated by what he pretended concerning the prostitute, whom he led about with him. She was called *Helen* and from this circumstance he gave it out, that she was the wife of Menelaus, whose conjugal infidelity had occasioned the Trojan war. The objection of Middleton, that the deification of Simon is not noticed by any of the Roman writers, is equally frivolous. Of whom could such notice be expected? Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dion, were well acquainted with the

character of the Samaritan impostor. They also must have known the unworthy motives, which induced the senate to countenance him at Rome; and was it likely, that they should record the deification of a man, who, being a vagabond and an impostor, disgraced his supporters, and whose elevation bespoke only the malice and baseness of those who sought to elevate him.

3. The fact, asserted by Justin, is also noticed by other early authors, who directly or indirectly bear testimony to the statue raised in honour of Simon. Among these are Irenæus, Eusebius, and Theodoret, writers of the highest credit in ecclesiastical history.

4. Some years after the claims of Jesus and of Simon had been discussed at Rome, Josephus was brought as an illustrious captive to that city. He witnessed the reproaches thrown upon Jesus and his faithful followers; and he felt it his duty to meet them, by a full and explicit testimony in his Antiquities. In doing this, he took an opportunity to contrast these very opposite claimants, by bringing them together, and placing them before the reader in the same page. "And about this time existed Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he might be called a man: for he was the author of wonderful works, and the teacher of such men as delight in the truth.——Nor did the nation of the Samaritans escape disturbance.

For they were stirred up by a man, who made no scruple of telling falsehoods; and who, influenced by the desire of popularity, imposed on the multitude by various artifices*," &c.

Nothing could be more wise and effectual than this conduct of Josephus. After having attested the wisdom, the love of truth, and the wonderful works, which distinguished our Lord, he holds

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* Ουκ απηλλακτο δε θορυβου και το Σαμαρεων εθνος. συςρεφει γαρ αυτους ανηρ εν ολιγῳ το ψευδος τιθεμενος, και εφ ἡδονῃ της πληθυος τεχναζων τα παντα, &c. While Justin serves to unfold the reason which Josephus had for thus contrasting our Lord and the Samaritan impostor, he in return is confirmed by Josephus; though modern critics have all given him up as mistaken, and even the learned Thirlby has virtually abandoned him as indefensible. "I shall not undertake," says Jortin, Remarks on Eccles. History, vol. ii. p. 159. "the vindication of Justin concerning the celebrated statue erected to Simon Magus: I am inclined to think that he was mistaken, and that the proud Romans would never have deified a Samaritan knave and a strolling magician. It seems more probable that they would have sent him to the house of correction, or have bestowed transportation on him, or *a stone doublet* (λαινον χιτωνα) sooner than a statue." Dr. Thirlby's note concludes thus: "Si quis autem quærat quid de hac re ipse sentiam, patroni me potius quam judicis partes egisse, negare non possum, quæque dixi, non tam veritatis gratia quam Justini dixisse, cujus mihi cum editione defensio ex veteri more necessario suscipienda erat."

up to public infamy, as a liar, an impostor, and a disturber of the public peace, the man whom the senate, from hatred against the truth, had raised to divine honours. It is observable, that Josephus, whose transitions in general are easy and obvious, has here violated the natural order of time and place: Jesus from Judea, and Simon from Samaria, are brought to Rome, and connected with the transactions which occurred in that city. The cause of this apparent abruptness is to be sought in the circumstances, in which this cautious advocate published his history. In Rome, Jesus was vilified as a magician; in Rome, Simon was advanced to divine honours. In Rome, therefore, Josephus was called upon to justify the one, and to expose the other. And it would have been more creditable in modern critics to explore the design of the writer, than to reject the passage as spurious, from its apparent want of connection.

CHAPTER XIII.

PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS IN ALEXANDRIA.

WE have already seen the great commotions, which attended the introduction and prevalence of the gospel at Damascus, at Antioch, and even in the capital of the empire: I now proceed to unfold a scene of far greater distress and magnitude—I mean the sufferings of the Jews, or as I shall presently shew them to have been, the Jewish believers in Egypt.

These sufferings are related by Philo, who was himself a spectator of all the transactions which he has recorded. This country had shared in the happy order and tranquillity, which the salutary measures of Tiberius had established in all the provinces of the empire. At the death of that emperor, Flaccus had been governor of Egypt nearly five years, during which period he conducted the affairs of that nation with great wisdom and equity, administering justice with impartiality, protecting the Jews, as well as the Egyptians, in the exercise of their civil and re-

ligious rights, and restraining or punishing only the licentious, the disturbers of the public peace, or the violaters of the laws.

But when Caligula succeeded to the empire, that præfect became the bitterest enemy of the Jews, having conceived, as Sejanus had done before him, the diabolical scheme, as far as he could, of exterminating that nation. The causes of the extraordinary change, which took place in his sentiments and conduct, are stated by Philo, in a book entitled *Against Flaccus;* of which, as far as it exhibits the cruel treatment of the Jews, I shall here give a concise account.

The people of Alexandria, headed by certain demagogues*, who ever sought their own interest in the public confusion, openly resolved to harass and expel the Jews. They knew, that the new emperor was no friend to Flaccus: and this they thought a circumstance favourable to their design. They therefore reminded him, that his fortune, in regard to the emperor, was precarious; that his friends at Rome were no more; and that no mediator remained, who might secure to him the good will of Caligula, but the

* These demagogues Philo calls Διονυσιοι, δημοκοποι, λαμπωνες, γραμματοκυφωνες, ισιδωροι, σασιαρχαι, φιλοπραγμονες, κακων ευρεται, ταραξιπολιδες.

city of Alexandria, which had been held in high estimation by all the Roman emperors, and was particularly esteemed by the present. That city now proffered to him its friendly intercession, which it promised faithfully to perform, if he consented to destroy the Jews in that country. This representation had its desired effect. Flaccus no longer acted for himself, but became a mere tool in the hands of men, who professed to be his friends, but who in reality were, in their hearts, enemies to him and to the whole community. The consequences of this change were soon felt by the Jews. The leading men of that nation had hitherto enjoyed his confidence and friendship; and appear to have been in the number of his wisest advisers. These he no longer admitted into his presence; and the gates of mercy and of justice were alike closed against the whole of that devoted people.

A circumstance at this time occurred, which kindled into a flame the embers of jealousy and hatred, already smoking in the breast of Flaccus. Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, being a favourite with Caius Cæsar, received from his hands the third part of his grandfather's kingdom. And wishing to return home with all possible expedition, he passed through Alexandria in the most private manner, hoping to enter that city and to leave it without being observed or

even known. He was, however, immediately recognized; and the Egyptians, who had ever been known as the most envious and turbulent of men, represented his aggrandizement, as if it involved their own degradation. They insinuated to the præfect, that his object in passing through Egypt, after being just invested with the splendor of royalty, was to degrade the governor, and to bring his authority into contempt with the people. Flaccus caught the infection; and while he professed to be the friend of Agrippa, he encouraged the buffoons of his court to make him the subject of mimickry and derision.

The following farce, as likely to remind my readers of a tragedy, which had lately been performed in Judea, is worthy of being related in the words of Philo. "A maniac," says he, "named Carabas, spent his days and nights naked in the street; being gentle and inoffensive, he was the sport of children. They brought this unhappy person into the Gymnasium; and having placed him on an eminence, so as to be seen by all around, they put upon his head a broad reed for a diadem, and covered his body with a carpet, instead of a scarlet robe, and withal placed as a sceptre in his hand a rush picked up by the way. Having thus invested him with the mock insignia of royalty, persons were intro-

duced to him, some as if to salute him as a king, others to receive his decision in the administration of justice, and others again to consult him in matters of state. Then a loud cry was heard from the surrounding crowd, saluting him *Lord*."*

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* Ην τις μεμνως ονομα Καραβας, ου την αγριαν και θηριωδη μανιαν· ασκηπτος γαρ αὐτη γε και τοις εχουσι και τοις πλησιαζουσιν, αλλα και ανειμενην και μαλακωτεραν. ουτος διημερευε και διενυκτερευε εν ταις ὁδοις, ουτε θαλπος ουτε κρυμον εκτρεπομενος, αθυρμα νηπιων και μειρακιων σχολαζοντων. Συνελασαντες τον αθλιον αχρι τον γυμνασιον, και στησαντες μετεωρον, ἱνα καθορωτο προς παντων, βυβλον μεν ευρυναντες αντι διαδηματος επιθεασιν αυτου τη κεφαλη, χαμαιστρωτῳ δε το αλλο σωμα περιβαλλουσιν αντι χλαμυδος, αντι δε σκηπτρου βραχυ τι παπυρου τμημα της εγχωριου καθ' ὁδον ερριμμενον ιδοντες αναδιδοασιν. επει δε ὡς εν θεατρικοις μιμοις τα παρασημα της βασιλειας ανειληφει, και διεκεκασμητο εις βασιλεα, νεανεαι ῥαβδους επι των ωμων φεροντες αντι λογχοφορων ἑκατερωθεν ἑιστηκεσαν, μιμουμενοι δορυφορους· ειθ' ἑτεροι προσηεσαν, ὁι μεν ὡς ασπασομενοι, ὁι δε ὡς δικαζομενοι, ὁι δε ὡς εντευξομενοι περι κοινων πραγματων· ειτα εκ περιεχοντος εν κυκλῳ πληθους, εξηχει τις βοη ατοπος, Μαριν αποκαλουντων· ὁυτως δε φασι τον κυριον ονομαζεσθαι παρα Συροις. Vol. ii. 522, p. 970.

From this last clause, Scaliger, Mangey, and others have

At this insult, flagrant as it was, Flaccus connived, though he knew that the immediate object of it stood high in favour with Cæsar; and the connivance taught the populace, that they had nothing to fear from justice, whatever atrocity they might be guilty of in regard to the Jews. They therefore proceeded to profane the Jewish synagogues, by the introduction of images. These were the images of Cæsar; and by this the Egyptian demagogues evinced, that their cunning was not inferior to their malice and wickedness. Philo justly remarks, that the name of Cæsar was a mere pretext; and that the profanation of the Jewish sanctuaries was not to honour the emperor, but to abuse the Jews. This once favoured people justly gloried in the

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concluded, that Philo was unacquainted with the language of Palestine, as if he depended on common report, that *Marin* meant *Lord*. But nothing can exceed the stupidity and rashness of this conclusion: for φασι here signifies not *they say*, but agreeably to a very common usage of the word, *they thought*, or *they understood*.—Then the crowd with a loud cry called him *Marin*: "for they understood the Syrians thus denominate *Lord*." It was not to be supposed, that the rabble of Alexandria understood *Syriac*, yet they had learnt the signification of this word; and Philo very properly intimates, that as they were themselves unacquainted with the language, they depended on the opinion of others for the sense of *Marin*.

exclusive prerogative which they enjoyed, as the worshippers of the true God; nor could an injury be offered them, which called forth keener resentment, or more obstinate resistance, than the slightest attempt to pollute the purity of their worship, by any mixture of pagan idolatry. The Jews, who inhabited Alexandria and Egypt, from Lybia to the confines of Æthiopia, amounted, as Philo informs us, to the astonishing number of one million*. The pollution of the Jewish synagogues in the city would necessarily prove the signal for a similar attack in the provinces, and in all the great towns of the empire, as soon as the news of it should arrive. The governor was fully sensible of this dreadful consequence; and yet he rather encouraged than repressed a violence, which was equally abhorrent from justice, and the hitherto liberal maxims of the Roman government; and which he knew, as our author justly remarks, was likely to fill the whole habitable world with intestine wars.

After this indignity, we can be surprised at no violence, however outrageous, offered to the persons and property of the Jews. The descend-

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* Ουκ αποδεουσι μυριαδων εκατον οι την Αλεξανδρειαν και την χωραν, απο του προς Λιβυην καταβαθμου μεχρι των ὁριων Αιθιοπιας.

ants of Abraham had received from Alexander the free privileges of citizens in Alexandria, and they enjoyed those privileges without interruption, and unmolested, from that period to the present, during the long space of four hundred years. In a few days Flaccus published an edict, in which he branded the Jews as *intruders* and *strangers** in Alexandria. By this outrage, they were deprived of their civil rights and protection of the laws, without appeal, and even without any offence being alleged against them, a proceeding the most cruel and arbitrary; the governor, to use the language of our author, being at once their enemy, their prosecutor, their judge, and their executioner.

I will relate the sequel, as near as I can, in the words of Philo. "Flaccus after this permitted every one who had a mind, to plunder and destroy the Jews, as if they were captives taken in war. And what was the conduct of those who received this permission? The city being divided into five parts, two of these were

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* Ολιγαις ὑστερον ἡμεραις τιθησι προγραμμα, δι' ου ξενους και επηλυδας ἡμας απεκαλει, μηδε λογου μεταδους, αλλα ακριτως καταδικαζων· ου τι αν ειη τυραννιδος επαγγελμα μειζον; αυτος γενομενος τα παντα, κατηγορος, εχθρος, μαρτυς, δικαστης, κολαστης. P. 973.

appropriated chiefly by the Jews, nor were the three other destitute of Jewish inhabitants. Of these they were deprived, and forced into one very small portion, which being able to contain but comparatively a few, the multitude rushed in torrents to the shores, into burying-grounds and into desert places, there to abide, though now deprived of all their goods. Their enemies finding the houses thus defenceless, entered and plundered them, and divided the goods among themselves, without any restraint or compunction. They also broke open the shops and workhouses; and carrying out whatever things they found valuable, divided them in the market-place, as if they were the rightful owners. In consequence of this cruelty, the Jews were unable to follow their daily business; and they were exposed to famine, not less by being deprived of their goods, than by being prevented to enjoy the fruits of their accustomed employments."

The sufferings of the Jews in this situation, according to our author, exceeded all description: and these sufferings were aggravated by the consideration, that the want, under which they laboured, was surrounded by plenty, the country that year having been unusually productive, and that they were caused by a people who a little before were their friends, and who became their enemies by those very means, which

ought to have perpetuated their friendship. "Being unable," continues he, "any longer to bear hunger, some went about to their friends and relatives, begging a little bread; others disdaining to beg, as ignoble and servile, ventured to the market-place to purchase necessaries for themselves and their families. These unhappy people were immediately seized and destroyed by the mob, being trampled to death, or dragged through the streets till their bodies were torn to pieces, and scattered so that not a limb remained to be interred."

"Thousands perished in various other ways, equally cruel and savage, their persecutors raving, as if they had assumed the nature of ferocious beasts. For wherever any of the Jews appeared, they wounded them with stones or clubs, taking care not to strike them in a vital part, lest instantaneous death might relieve them from the sense of pain. Some of these persecutors confident of impunity, and actuated by passion, disdained the use of blunter weapons, and had recourse to fire and iron, burning some and slaying many more with the sword. Whole families, children with their parents, husbands with their wives, were consumed by flames in the midst of the city, no compassion being taken on the aged, the young, or on innocent children, by their most unmerciful enemies. When wood

was wanting, they collected fuel, and caused the sufferers to perish more frequently by the smoke than by the flames, thus artfully effecting a most painful and lingering death to their unhappy victims, whose bodies, in heaps, lay half consumed, a shocking and most painful spectacle. If those sent to gather fuel were slow, they set fire to the utensils, which had been plundered, and on these burnt their owners. Many of those who still lived, they tied by the leg above the ancle, dragging them, and treading upon them, till they met that cruel death which was meditated against them. Nor did they satiate their fury by this treatment of the living; but pursued with unrelenting vengeance even the bodies which they had deprived of life, having torn their skin, flesh, and sinews, and dissevered their limbs by hawling them along the ground*."

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* Ειτα δυσι τοις προτεροις και το τριτον προσεθηκεν, εφεις ὡς εν ἁλωσει τοις εθελουσι πορθειν τους Ιουδαιους· οἱ δε λαβοντες αδειαν, τι πραττουσιν; . . εκ των τεττα-ρων γραμματων εξωκισαν τους Ιουδαιους, και συνηλασαν εις ἑνος μοιραν βραχυτατην· οἱ δε εξεχεοντο δια το πληθος εις αιγιαλους, και κοπριας, και μνηματα, παντων σερουμενοι των ἰδιων. Εκεινοι δε τας ερημους οικιας καταδραμοντες, εφ ἁρπαγην ετραποντο, και ὡς εκ πολεμου λειαν διενεμοντο, μηδενος κωλυοντος· και τα εργασηρια των

The perpetrators of these cruelties sometimes personated the sufferers, and exhibited a mock

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Ιουδαιων συνκεκλεισμενα δια το επι Δρουσιλλη πενθος, αναρηξαντες, ὁσα ἑυρον, πολλα δε και ταυτα ην, εξεφορησαν, και δια μεσης αγορης εκομιζον, ὡς οικειοις τοις αλλοτριοις καταχρωμενοι. Της δ' ἁρπαγης ἡ απραξια κακον ην βαρυτερον, τας μεν ενθηκας απολωλεκοτων των πορισων, μηδενος δε εωμενου, μη γεωργου, μη ναυκληρου, μη εμπορου, μη τεχνιτου τα συνηθη πραγματευεσθαι· ὡς διχοθεν κατεσκευσθαι πενιαν, εκ τε της ὁρπαγης, εξουσιων μια ἡμερᾳ γενομενων και περισεσυλημενων τα ἰδια, κἀκ του μη δεδυνησθαι πορἰζειν εκ των συνηθων επιτηδευματων . . . μετα τας ἁρπαγας και τους εξοικισμους, και τας εκ των πλειστων μερων της πολεως βιαιας ελασεις, καθαπερ τειχηρεις, εν κυκλῳ περικαθημενων εχθρων, γεγονοτες, απορια και σπανει δεινῃ πιεζομενοι, και γυναια και τεκνα νηπια ὁρωντες εν οφθαλμοις παραπολλυμενα λιμῳ χειροποιητῳ . . . . μηκετι σεσειν δυναμενοι τας ενδειας, ὁι μεν επι συγγενων και φιλων, προτερον ουκ εἰωθοτες, οικιας πλθον ερανα αυτα τα αναγκαια αιτησοντες· ὁι δε απο φρονηματος ευγενους την μεταιτων τυχην ὡς δουλοπρεπη και ανελευθερον εκτρεπομενοι προηλθον εις αγορην, ουδενος ἑτερου χαριν, η του πριασθαι τοις τε οικειοις και ἑαυτοις τροφας, ὁι δυσυχεις. Ευθυ γαρ συναρπασθεντες ὑπο των την οχλοκρατιαν επιτειχισαντων, δολοφονουνται, και συρομενοι και πατουμενοι δια της πολεως ἁπασης εξαναλωθησαν, ουδενος

representation of them as on a stage; while of those who had really suffered, such relatives or

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ὑπολειφθεντος μερους, ὁ δυνησεται κοινωνησαι ταφης. Μυριους μεν και αλλους πολυτροποις κακων ιδεαις επιτετηδευμεναις εις χαλεπην ωμοτητα κατειργασαντο, και διεφθειραν οἱ λελυττηκοτες ὑπ' αγριοτητος εις θηριων φυσιν. Τους γαρ ὁπη τυχοι φανεντας των Ιουδαιων, η κατελευον, η ξυλοι κατεκοπτον, ουκ ευθυς επι τα καιριωτατα μερη τας πληγας φεροντες, ἱνα μη τελευτησαντες θαττον και την των οδυνηρων αντιληψιν αποθωνται. τη δε των συμφορων αδεια και εκεχειρια τινες επινεανευομενοι, των αμβλυτερων ὁπλων αλογησαντες, ανελαμβανον τα παντων ανυσιμωτατα πυρ και σιδηρον, και πολλους ξιφεσιν ανειλον, ουκ ολιγους δε πυρι διαφθειραν. ηδη δε και γενεας ὁλας, ανδρας μετα γονεων ενηπρησαν, ὁι παντων αγηλεεστατοι, κατα μεσην την πολιν, μη γηρας, μη νεοτητα, μη παιδων ακακον ἡλικιαν οικτισαμενοι· και ὁποταν ξυλων ὑλης απορησειαν, φρυγανα συλλεγοντες, καπνῳ το πλεον η πυρι διεφθειραν, οικτροτερον και επιμηκεστερον ολεθρον τοις δειλαιοις τεχναζοντες, ὡν τα σωματα ημιφλεκτα αναμιξ εκειτο, χαλεπη και οδυνηροτατη θεα. ει δε και περιλειφθεντες επι φλυγανισμον, εβραδυνον, επι των ἰδιων σκευων των εκ της ἁρπαγος ενεπιμπρων τους δεσποτους . . . πολλους δε και ζωντας τοιν ποδοιν τον ἑτερον εκδησαντες κατα το σφυρον, ἑλκον ἁμα και κατηλουν εναλλομενοι, θανατον ωμοτατον επινοησαντες· και τελευτησαντων, ουδεν ατελευτητα μηνιωντες, βαρυτερας αιτιας τοις

friends as were seen to weep from sympathy, were carried to execution, and there flogged and tortured on the wheel; and after sustaining all the indignities, which their bodies could endure, were hung on a cross.

No refinement in cruelty can seemingly add to the horrors of this frightful picture; yet Philo mentions one circumstance more, as greatly enhancing the afflictions of the Jews, and the unrelenting malice of Flaccus. Augustus had allowed the Alexandrian Jews to form a council, composed of eight and thirty of their own elders, for the protection of their rights, and the administration of their own affairs. These distinguished persons, whom the Jews regarded with the utmost

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σωμασιν επεφερων, δια παντων, ολιγου δεω φαναι, των της πολεως ξενωπων κατασυροντες, εως ὁ νεκρος, δορας, σαρκας, ινας, ὑπο της των εδαφων ανωμαλιας και τραχυτητος περιθρυφθεις, και των ἡνωμενων μερων της συμφυιας διασαντων, και διασπαρεντων αλλαχοσε αλλων, εδαπανηθη. και ὁι μεν ταυτα δρωντες, ὡσπερ εν τοις θεατρικοις μιμοις καθυπεκρινοντο τους πασχοντας· των δ' ὡς αληθως πεπονθοτων φιλοι και συγγενεις, ὁτι μονον ταις των προσηκοντων συμφοραις συνηλγησαν, απηγοντο, εμαστιγουντο, ετροχιζοντο. και μετα πασας τας αικιας ὁσας ηδυναντο χωρησαι τα σωματα αυτοις, ἡ τελευταια και εφεδρος τιμωρια, σαυρος ην. P. 973.

veneration, Flaccus seized within their own walls: and having tied their arms behind with iron chains, he led them forth to the theatre, where he ordered them to be flogged in the presence of their enemies. The stripes which they endured were those usually received by the vilest criminals; and as they were inflicted with inexorable severity, some of those honourable sufferers fell dead on the spot, while others were carried out without hopes of recovery. To aggravate these tortures, they were inflicted on the anniversary of the birth of Augustus; a season usually distinguished by festivity and clemency. "I have known some," says Philo, "that had been crucified, taken down from the cross on such seasons, and delivered to their relatives to be interred in a becoming manner: for it was fit to extend even to the dead, some benefit from Cæsar's festival, and at the same time to preserve its solemnity unsullied by sorrow. But Flaccus, instead of taking down the dead, suspended the living; and this he did, after having, in the midst of the theatre, exposed them to stripes, to fire, and to the sword, a spectacle to entertain the populace." This disgraceful scene continued three or four hours each morning, during which the Jews were whipped, hung, and tortured on the wheel; and after receiving a mock trial, were led through the

orchestra to execution. The exhibition concluded with dancing, mimickry, music, and similar entertainments *.

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* Εδει και νεκρους απολαυσαι τινος χρησου γενεθλιακαις αυτοκρατορος, και ἁμα το ἱεροπρεπες πανηγυρεως φυλαχθηναι. ὁ δε ου τετελευτηκοτας επι σαυρων καθαιρειν, ζωντας δ' ανασκολοπιζεσθαι, προσεταττεν . . . και ταυτα ειργαζετο μετα το πληγαις αικισασθαι εν μεσω τῳ θεατρῳ, και πυρι και σιδηρῳ βασανισαι. και ἡ θεα διενενεμητο. τα μεν γαρ πρωτα των θεαματων αχρι τριτης ὡρας η τεταρτης εξ εωθινου ταυτα ην· Ιουδαιοι μαστιγουμενοι, κρεμαμενοι, τροχιζομενοι, καταδικαζομενοι, δια μεσης της ορχηστρας απαγομενοι την επι θανατῳ· τα δε μετα την καλην ταυτην επιδειξιν, και ορχησαι και μιμοι και αυληται, και ὁσα αλλα σκηνικων αθυρματα αγωνων. P. 977.

These cruelties proceeded not from a natural hardness of heart in Flaccus, but from the wish of ingratiating himself with the people of Alexandria. Philo expressly asserts this to be his motive, εσπευδε και κατηπειγεν ενεκα της προς τον εναντιον οχλον αρεσκειας, ταυτη νομιζων εξοικειωσεσθαι μαλλον αυτον εις ἁπερ διενοειτο. The conduct of Flaccus naturally reminds us of Pilate who delivered our Lord to the Jews, to answer the same interested end. Our author is particular in saying that the persons, who were guilty of these excesses, comprehended not the more respectable classes, but the loose and idle rabble of Alexandria.—οχλος ουχ ὁ καθεσως και δημοτικος, αλλα ὁ παντα θορυβου και ταραχης ειωθως αναπιμπλαναι, δια φιλοπραγ-

My readers will learn with pleasure, that the author of these cruelties soon met from the hands of justice the punishment which he deserved. On the accession of Caligula, the Jews prepared for him an address, in which they expressed their attachment to his person and government, and their readiness to offer him all the homage which was consistent with the nature and purity of their laws. This address they were allowed to transmit only through the hands of the governor, who affected greatly to approve of it; and he promised to forward it without delay to the emperor. But he had the baseness to detain it; and thus, observes Philo, he left Cæsar to conclude, that the Jews were the only people in the empire, who were not his friends and well wishers. Soon after this Agrippa arrived in Alexandria, where he learnt the real state of the case; and as he stood high in favour with Caligula, he took upon him to send him a copy of the address that had been long since entrusted to Flaccus. The emperor, no

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μασυνην και ζηλον αβιωτου βιου. They were instigated and directed by Apion, Helicon, and some others, who were not Egyptians by birth; but the greater part were natives of Alexandria; and Philo thus briefly characterizes them, σπερματα πονηρα χροκοδειλων και ασπιδων των εγχωριων αναμεμαγμενοι τον ιον ομου και θυμον εν ταις ψυχαις.

doubt more from dislike of the prefect, than from a regard to justice and to the Jews, dispatched a centurion to convey him to Rome. The commission was executed with all possible expedition. Flaccus appeared before Cæsar to answer for his conduct. At his trial many aggravating circumstances concurred to embitter the sense of of his guilt and degradation. *Lampo* and *Isiodorus*, two men who were his instigators and pretended friends in Egypt, stood forth as his bitterest accusers. He was condemned and banished to Andros, an island in the Egean Sea, where he pined away by remorse, want, and solitude, till, some time after, he was put to death by a person whom Caligula had dispatched from Rome for that purpose.

In a book entitled *De Virtutibus*, and of which I shall presently give a brief view, Philo again speaks of a dreadful persecution, which the Jews underwent in Egypt a year or two, it is supposed, after the recal of Flaccus. "The populace of Alexandria," says he, "perceiving that Caligula hated the Jews, and thinking it a fit opportunity to shew their long cherished animosities, fell upon us, and filled every place with violence and tumult. Regarding us, as already devoted by the emperor to extreme suffering, and as captives taken in war, they assailed us with the most savage fury, attacking and plundering our houses, and

dragging away the inhabitants with their wives and children. They seized our goods and treasures, not as thieves in the night, concealing themselves, under the covert of darkness, for fear of detection, but they exhibited in the light of day, to those whom they chanced to meet, the fruits of their rapine, as if they had purchased them of the lawful owners. Many in parties combined to plunder, and afterwards, in the market place, divided the spoils in the presence of those who came to own their goods, and who received only reproach and derision. In consequence of this hard treatment, the rich on a sudden, and without any injustice on their part, became poor; and those who had been hitherto surrounded with the elegances, wanted even the necessaries of life, were forced from their homes and their families, and compelled, like vagabonds, to spend their days and nights under the open air, scorched by the meridian sun, and chilled by the midnight damps."

But these hardships were still more tolerable than the following—" Thousands of men, with their wives and children, were driven like flocks from the city at large, and forced into one small corner as into a fold. These, in heaps, their enemies expected to waste in a few days by famine; the suddenness of the insurrection against them having prevented them from providing necessa-

ries, or to be trampled to death, or to be suffocated by an exhausted or vitiated air, from so great a multitude being confined in so small a space. Such as survived, being unable to endure so great a confinement, and anxious to breathe fresh and salutary air, withdrew into desert places, or concealed themselves in monuments, or dispersed along distant shores. They who remained in the different parts of the city, or who, being ignorant of the calamities which befel the Jews, had just returned from the country, encountered the most dreadful sufferings. Some were stoned, and others were beaten with clubs or broken tiles, till they were crushed to death. Such of our enemies as had leisure from accustomed idleness, or the want of employment, encompassed the Jews thus penned, as with a wall, and watched lest any should escape unperceived. Thus circumstanced, not a few, in their attempt to get away, lest they and their families should perish with hunger, were detected, and instantly exposed to every species of indignity and torments."

Another body of the populace waited about the harbour for the entrance of such vessels as the Jews employed for the purposes of commerce. Those which came within their reach they seized, stripped of their cargo in the presence of their owners, whom they bound up and burnt alive, using

pieces of timber torn from the ship, to answer this end. "Many also were burnt in the midst of the city: and the miseries which these endured, were still more terrible. In the absence of wood, fuel or straw was collected, into which, when blown into flames, they threw the unhappy victims. These were oftener suffocated than burnt, the fuel having only supplied a transient blaze, which was succeeded by a cloud of smoke. Many remained half consumed, and yet alive: and these they bound with cords or wrapped in nets, and then dragged by the heel along the streets, trampling upon them alternately with their feet, till they were torn to pieces, not a limb, nor a single vestige of the human form, remaining to receive the decent office of interment *."

This last persecution, as given in a different book, and as the name of the governor is not mentioned in it, is thought by learned men, not to be the same with that, of which Flaccus was the immediate author, and which took place in the first and second years of Caligula, but another succeeding it in the last of that emperor. But there is sufficient evidence to prove, that this is a mistake: the sufferings related in the book against Flaccus, and those stated in the book *De*

* P. 1009, 1010, or Vol. II. p. 562, &c.

Virtutibus, are the same; though it be a melancholy fact, that the Jews, not only in Egypt, but in every other province, were oppressed without any interruption, during the last three years of Caligula's reign.

The last mentioned work being written against that infamous emperor, relates his cruelty as displayed in the murder of his friends and relations; his folly in assuming the names and insignia, without emulating the supposed virtues, of Jupiter, Apollo, Mars, and Mercury, and his wickedness in attempting to place his statue in the temple at Jerusalem, in opposition to the whole Jewish nation, together with the treatment which the deputation sent from Alexandria in behalf of the Jews, received from Caligula. The book, indeed, is one of the finest publications of that eloquent author; and is equal, if not superior, to any of the choicest productions of Greece and Rome, for the elegance of its style, the richness of its sentiments, the lustre of its eloquence, and the importance and variety of the topics on which it dwells. Eusebius has mentioned one circumstance respecting this work, which happily accounts for the peculiar features by which it is distinguished. He says, that the contents of it were delivered before the emperor Claudius and senate; and that so forcible was the impression, which his narrative of the sufferings of the Jews

left on the assembly, that, obdurate and prejudiced as they were, they so admired it, as to have it placed in the public library*. This assertion of the father of ecclesiastical history, is abundantly corroborated by internal evidence. 1. Philo, in one place, personally addresses the reigning Cæsar†, and compliments him as rising in the character of universal emperor, above the the mean jealousy of individuals, families, or

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* Επι πασης λεγεται της Ρωμαιων συγκλητου κατα Κλαδιον διελθειν, ὡς και της εν βιβλιοθηκαις αναθεσεως θαυμασθεντας αυτου καταξιωθηναι τους λογους. E. H. lib. 2. c. 18.

† Φθονος ουδεποτε πασαν την οικουμενην εκρατησεν, αλλ' ουδε τας μεγαλας αυτης αποτομας, ὁλην Ευρωπην, η ὁλην Ασιαν· αλλ' ιοβολου τροπον ἑρπετου φωλευει, βραχεσιν εισερπυσας χωριοις, ανδρι ἑνι, η οικω ἑνι, η ειποτε πολυς αγαν πνεοι, πολει μια· προς δε μειζονα κυκλον εθνους η χωρας ου προσεισι, και μαλιστα αφ' ὁυ το ὑμετερον γενος, το Σεβασιον ουτως ηρξατο πρυτανευειν των πανταχου παντων. P. 999. Here the author speaks of *envy*, under the figure of a *serpent*, which was deemed the symbol of divinity among the Egyptians: with the envy and malignity which this people had shewn towards the Jews, Philo contrasts the liberality and beneficence of the house of Cæsar. Hence the source of his metaphor, and the meaning of the passage, which is equally elegant, energetic, and appropriate.

cities, and spreading peace and plenty over the whole world. 2. The author, in this work, mentions many of the heathen gods, and that without exposing them as false or fictitious, as he has done with great force and eloquence in his other works; a circumstance which supposes, that such an exposure, on the occasion in which he delivered its contents, would be unsafe or imprudent. 3. The people of Alexandria would have refrained from rising against the Jews, if they had not been assured, that they were objects of dislike and jealousy to Caligula; and from the same assurance only Flaccus connived at, or favoured the the insurrection. That emperor, therefore, was the primary author of the miseries with which that nation were visited in Egypt. Accordingly, in this book, Philo arraigns Caligula as the sole cause of the calamities which befel the Jews at Alexandria: while he alludes to the governor as having only tolerated iniquities, which he had power to restrain*. 4. Finally, it appears evident that the insurrection mentioned in the book

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* Του δε επιτροπου της χωρας, ὁς μονος εδυνατο βουληθεις ὡρᾳ μιᾳ την οχλοκρατιαν καθελειν, προσποιουμενου ἁ, τε εωρα μη ὁραν, και ὡν ηκουε, μη επακουειν, &c. P. 1011. This very language our author uses respecting Flaccus, in the book against that præfect; and this of itself sufficiently shews that Flaccus is here intended. See p. 971.

De Virtutibus was *new, sudden,* and *unexpected.* It could not, therefore, have been preceded by another, but must have been the same with that which commenced under Flaccus.

These arguments, it seems to me, prove with moral certainty, that the author refers in both works to the same persecution: it follows therefore, that while the book De Virtutibus was published at Rome, that against Flaccus was published at a later period in Egypt; each giving an account of the same transactions, with such diversity of circumstances, as the two situations respectively required. The former is more brief and general, and imputes the mischiefs complained of to the emperor; the latter, on the other hand, is more minute and circumstantial, and traces the same subjects of complaint to Flaccus as the immediate cause.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE INTRODUCTION AND PREVALENCE OF THE GOSPEL IN EGYPT, THE REAL AND PRIMARY CAUSE OF THE AFFLICTIONS WHICH BEFEL THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN THAT COUNTRY.

PHILO, we have shewn, is a christian writer, a christian apologist, and on many occasions a christian historian. His zeal for Christ, therefore led him, as much as possible, to throw the veil of secrecy and silence over the gospel, as the primary and innocent cause of all the disturbances which took place in Egypt. He accordingly refers those disturbances to the bad passions of those men who, hating the light and influence of christianity, became the immediate agents in raising them. Thus, he represents the city of Alexandria as envying the Jews; next as alienating from them the emperor and præfect; and, lastly, as falling upon that devoted people, and putting them to death in every shape, with all the circumstances of the most savage barbarity, and that with little intermission during the space

of two or three years: and these representations he makes, without even intimating that they had any cause on the part of the Jews; a circumstance which leaves his narrative at once *partial* and imperfect. But, was it possible, that the people of Alexandria should act this part without some very great provocation, real or imaginary, on the part of the Jews? The race of Abraham had multiplied to an amazing extent, and risen to distinction and opulence in Egypt. Alexander made them free citizens of the city, which he had built and called by his own name; and secured to them the uncontrouled exercise of their religious rights. From the days of that conqueror, they continued during four hundred years in the enjoyment of those rights and privileges, without any serious attempt made by the Greeks or Egyptians to abridge or molest them. But, while a little before, they were regarded as friends, they are now on a sudden treated as enemies. Their prerogatives, civil and religious, are not only disputed, but altogether withdrawn; their sanctuaries are profaned, their houses plundered, and their persons either consigned to the flames or sold for slavery. The cause, and the only adequate cause, of this melancholy change is to be found in the efficacy of the christian doctrine, which was introduced even at this early period, and widely propagated in Egypt.

The real existence and operation of this cause is not to be disputed. Philo has given us a history of the christians in Egypt: he represents them as a people excelling all others in wisdom and virtue, as divine physicians healing the souls of men from innumerable vices and bad passions, otherwise irremediable, and as having communicated with success the inestimable blessing which they enjoyed, not only to numbers in the provinces of Egypt, but in every part of the habitable globe. The gospel, therefore, was introduced into Egypt and widely received there, even so early as the time of Caligula. Its introduction and prevalence, therefore, are the real cause of the convulsions described by Philo. This fact appears to me to require no farther proof to establish it; yet I will produce a few remarks to illustrate and corroborate its truth.

I. Into whatever country christianity was introduced, the first object of its friends was to subvert the reigning superstition. The preachers of the gospel, in every place, denied the existence or exposed the character of the pagan deities, and called upon men to reject with contempt and abhorrence those imaginary beings, which they had hitherto regarded as objects of worship. This was a task no less dangerous than difficult; as it was sure to kindle the animosities of those, who were induced by bigotry or interest to resist the truth.

The advocates of reformation could not hope, in many instances, to convince the interested devotees of paganism; and their efforts, where they could not prove successful, must have provoked not only the opposition, but the violence of their adversaries. The book of the Acts presents us with one remarkable instance of the convulsions, that attended the propagation of the new faith among the Gentiles; and the cry, "Great is Diana," resounded not less at Alexandria than in Ephesus or Antioch.

The writings of Philo furnish happy instances of the energy and eloquence with which the champions of the gospel assailed the contemptible divinities of Egypt. "The materials of idols and statues," says he, "are wood and stone, entirely rude and shapeless, till they were conveyed from their native place, and invested with form by the hands of the artist. Substances of the same quarry, or of the same stem, are often destined for less honourable services, being wrought into pots or tubs, or into such other still meaner vessels as are used in darkness rather than in the light. The Gods of the Egyptians, it is disgraceful even to name. These people have raised to divine honours not only brute animals that are tame, but the fiercest of every kind under heaven, which the earth, the sea, or the air can supply—the lion, the crocodile, the hawk, and the ibis:

they worship these creatures, though known to be produced, to stand in need of support, to be insatiable for food, to be full of excrements, to be prone to poison the blood and devour the flesh of man, and to be liable to perish by various diseases, death, and violence. By such debasement, the laws of reason and nature are inverted: for civilized and reasonable beings bow before fierce and irrational creatures—they, who bear the image of God, prostrate before monsters which are not on a level with the beasts of the field; and animals which nature intended to fear and obey, receive homage and submission from their lords and masters *."

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* Των ξοανων και αγαλματων ἡ ουσια λιθοι και ξυλα τα μεχρι της προ μικρου τελειως αμορφα, λιθοτομων και δρυτομων της συμφυιας αυτα διακοψαντων· ὡν τα αδελφα μερη και συγγενη λουτροφοροι γεγονασι, και ποδονιπτρα και αλλα ἀττα των ατιμοτερων, ἁ προς τας εν σκοτῳ χρειας ὑπηρετει μαλλον η εν φωτι. των μεν γαρ παρ Αιγυπτιοις ουδε μεμνησθαι καλον· ὁι ζωα αλογα και ουχ ἡμερα μονον, αλλα και θηριων τα αγριοτατα παραγηοχασιν εις θεων τιμας, εξ ἑκαστου των κατα σεληνης· χερσαιων μεν λεοντα, ενυδρων δε τον εγχωριον κροκοδειλον, αεροπορων δε ιχτινον και την Αιγυπτιαν ιβιν. Και ταυτα ὁρωντες γεννωμενα, και τροφης χρειαν εχοντα και περι εδωδην απληστα, και περιττωματων μεστα, ιοβολα τε και ανθρωποβορα, και νοσοις ἁλωτα παντοιαις, και ου μονον

Representations, eloquent, powerful, and unanswerable like these, must have produced very sensible effects even on the debased natives of Egypt; nor could the refractory by any means counteract them, but by having recourse to force and persecution. The priest, the scribe, the artist, and the magistrate, when too much hardened by the deceitfulness of sin to reform, too proud to learn, and too worldly-minded to resign the love of gain, necessarily inflamed the populace against the authors of such reasoning, and instigated them to retort on the God of the Jews, the indignity which was thus heaped on the gods of Egypt. It was undoubtedly resentment of this kind, which prompted the Egyptians to profane the synagogues of the Jews with the images of Cæsar.

After the accession of Claudius, the Jews were again restored to their rights, and protected in the exercise of their religion; and an edict for this purpose was dispatched into Egypt, and the other provinces by that emperor; and it is important to observe, that the edict sent to Alex-

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θανατῳ το κατα φυσιν, αλλα και βιαιῳ πολλακις διαφθειρομενα προςκυνουσιν, οἱ ἡμεροι τα ανημερα και ατιθασσα, και οἱ λογικα τα αλογα, και οἱ συγγενειαν προς το θειον τα μηδε αν θηρσι τισι συγκριθεντα, οἱ αρχοντες και δεσποται τα ὑπηκοα φυσει και δουλα. Vol. II. 472. p. 890, 891.

andria contains a pointed allusion to the successful efforts, made there by the advocates of the gospel, to bring into contempt the pagan superstition. This document is preserved by Josephus, and is in part as follows: "I therefore think it proper, that the Jews under us, in all the world, should, without opposition, retain their paternal customs: *and upon that people I enjoin to use with more moderation, this my clemency in their behalf, and not bring into contempt the superstitions of other nations, but adhere to their own laws.* It is my wish that governors of cities, of colonies, and of municipal towns, both within and without Italy; that also princes and men in power, should by their ministers transcribe this mandate, and have it so posted up as to be easily read from the ground *"

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* Καλως ουν εχειν και Ιουδαιους τους εν παντι τω ὑφ ἡμας κοσμω τα πατρια εθη ανεπικωλυτως φυλασσειν, ὁις και αυτοις ηδη νυν παραγγελλω μου ταυτη τη φιλανθρωπια επιεικιστερον χρησθαι, και μη τας δεισιδαιμονιας των αλλων εθνων εξουθενιζειν, τους ἰδιους δε νομους φυλασσειν· τουτο μου το διαταγμα τους αρχοντας των πολεων, και κωλωνειων και μουνικιπιων, των εν τη Ιταλιακαι των εκτος, βασιλεις τε και δυναστας δια των ιδιων πρεσβευτων εγγραψασθαι βουλομαι, εκκειμενον τε εχειν, ουκ ελαττον ἡμερων τριακοντα, ὁθεν εξ επιπεδου καλως αναγνωσθηναι δυναται. **Jud. Ant. Lib. xix. Cap. 5, 3.**

II. Philo says, that the Egyptians intended to insult Agrippa, by their treatment of Carabas the maniac. They might obliquely have entertained this intention. But that prince could not have been the direct and appropriate object of their derision: for he was known in Egypt to have been of royal extraction, and to have been invested with the title and prerogatives of king, the emperor himself having assigned him the third part of Herod's dominion. The mockery, therefore, in regard to Agrippa, had no point or propriety, but must have been intended to deride the Jews, as the followers of one, who had lately received a similar treatment in Judea. Considered as a reflection on the death of Jesus, the conduct of the Egyptians was natural, pointed, and malicious. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers, and they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail king of the Jews." "And they brought a maniac," says Philo, "and having placed him on an eminence, they put upon his head a broad reed for a diadem, and covered his body with a carpet instead of a scarlet robe, and withal placed a rush picked

up in the way as a sceptre in his hand. Having thus invested him with the mock insignia of royalty, persons were introduced to him, some as if to salute him as a king.——Then a loud cry was heard from the surrounding crowd, saluting him Lord."

III. In every country, and especially in the east, the female part of mankind, I have already observed, have been depressed beneath their proper rank in the scale of society. The spirit of christianity, and the example of its founder, tended to correct this evil, and to restore the sexes to their natural equality as moral and rational beings. The influence of the gospel, in this respect, was soon felt; and in every place where it was preached, the women in general gave it a more ready and cordial reception than the men. Josephus, we have seen, presents us with one remarkable instance of the truth of this observation; and we may infer, from the language of Philo, that it was equally true in regard to the christians in Egypt. "The women," says he, "join in the festivals of these holy men, the greater part of whom have preserved their virgin purity, not by compulsion, like the heathen vestals, but by their own free choice. Their enthusiastic zeal for wisdom, with which alone they wish to unite, disposes them to despise the pleasures of the body, and to seek that offspring of

the soul, those fruits of righteousness, which an union with God alone can produce."

The conversion of a multitude of women to the refined judaism, taught by the followers of Jesus, ascertains the meaning of the following passage in the book against Flaccus.

"The cruelty of the governor and of the populace," says the indignant author, "extended even to the women, who, being seized, were conveyed as captives to the theatre, and exposed under some trifling charges with circumstances of aggravated and unsupportable indignity. Many of these were taken for Jewesses, though they were not really so; and when discovered to belong to a different race, they were dismissed. If they belonged to us, the spectators, as if they had over them the authority which masters have over slaves, ordered the flesh of swine to be brought them. Those who tasted of it from the fear of pain, were released, without any farther violence; while those, who had the resolution and firmness to refuse, were exposed to irremediable tortures: and their constancy was a sufficient proof of their innocence*."

* Γυναικες ουκ εν αγορη μονον, αλλα και εν μεσω τω θεατρω καθαπερ αιχμαλωτοι συνηρπαζοντο, και επι την σκηνην εφ' ὁτωδηποτε συκοφαντουμεναι παρηγοντο, μετα

The women, who appeared to be Jewish, and treated as such by the mob at Alexandria, while they were in reality of different extraction, must have been Gentile converts to the gospel*.

τινος αφορητου και αργαλεωτατης ὑβρεως· ειτ' επειδαν μεν εγνωριζθησαν ἑτερου γενους, απελυοντο. Πολλας γαρ ὡς Ιουδαιας, ακριβη μη ποιουμενοι της αληθειας την ερευνην, συνελαμβανον. ει δ' εφανησαν ἡμετεραι, προσεταττον, ὁι αντι θεατων τυραννοι και δεσποτοι γεγονοτες, κρεα χοιρεια διδοναι κομιζοντας. ὁσαι μεν ουν φοβω κολασεως απεγευσαντο, μηδεν ετι δεινον προσυπομεναι απελυοντο· αἱ δε εγκρατεσεραι βασανισαις παρεδιδυντο προς αικιας ανηκεστους· ὁπερ του μηδεν αδικειν αυτας σαφεστατη πιστις εστι προς τοις ειρημενοις. P. 979. vol. ii. 531.

* "The monks," says Gibbon, "of succeeding ages, who in their peaceful solitudes entertained themselves with diversifying the deaths and sufferings of the primitive martyrs, have frequently invented torments of a much more refined and ingenious nature. In particular, it has pleased them to suppose, that the zeal of the Roman magistrates, disdaining every consideration of moral virtue or of public decency, endeavoured to seduce those whom they were unable to vanquish; and that, by their orders, the most brutal violence was offered to those whom they found it impossible to seduce. It is related, that pious females, who were prepared to despise death, were condemned to a more severe trial, and were called upon to determine whether they set a higher value on their religion or on their chastity. The youths, to whose licentious embraces they were abandoned, received a solemn exhortation from the judge to exhort their most stre-

IV. The works of Philo, being numerous, and published at different times, and some of them in different places, serve greatly to illustrate each other. Thus, the account which he gives of the sufferings of the Jews at Alexandria, unfolds the circumstances on which are founded the books concerning the followers of Jesus. On the

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nuous efforts to maintain the honour of Venus, against the impious virgin, who refused to burn incense on her altars. Their violence, however, was commonly disappointed; and the seasonable interposition of some miraculous power preserved the chaste spouse of Christ from the dishonour even of an involuntary defeat. We should not, indeed, neglect to remark, that the more ancient, as well as authentic memorials of the church, are seldom polluted with these extravagant and indecent fictions." If the impurity of this author's imagination had not far exceeded the measure of his faith, he would have spared himself the pains, and his readers the disgust of this passage. It has been observed by Professor Porson, with no less severity than truth, that Gibbon's humanity slumbered, when women were ravished, and christians persecuted; and that the rage for indecency which pervades his history reminded him of a debauchee, who having from age, or excess, or accident, lost the vigour of the passions, still indulged in the luxury of speculation. If we divest the above indecent fictions, as this historian calls them, of the colouring which he has given to make them so, they will be found not to exceed in atrociousness and improbability those, which Philo attests in the above passage, one of the *most ancient* and *authentic memorials* of the christian church.

other hand, the books concerning the followers of Jesus, under the name of Esseans or Therapeutæ, prove with absolute certainty, that the Jews who suffered under Flaccus were, for the most part, believers in Christ. It is not, indeed, to be supposed, that the teachers of the gospel in Egypt, however enlightened, had at this early period just views respecting the messiahship of Jesus, or the nature of his kingdom, but must have been led by their early prejudices to hope, that, though ascended to heaven, he would again soon return, to deliver Israel. The people of Egypt, therefore, considered the teachers of the new faith, as no other than the preachers of treason and rebellion; as men, who endeavoured to dethrone Cæsar, and to raise a prince of their own to the throne of the universe. This apprehension, there is reason to believe, was too well founded; and the fatal mistake, on the part of the Jews, was the principal cause of all the tumults which they raised, and of all the calamities which they endured, in Rome, Alexandria, and the other great cities of the empire.

The suspicion generally entertained, that the Jews meditated a revolt from Cæsar, under the pretext of believing in Jesus, caused the governors of the provinces to watch them with the greatest vigilance, and often to ascribe to them crimes and intentions, of which they were per-

fectly innocent. An instance of this kind occurred at Alexandria. Flaccus suspected, or affected to suspect, that the Jews had arms secreted in their houses: he therefore dispatched a body of the soldiers to go, and without any previous notice enter their abodes. The consternation which this unexpected domiciliary visit excited among them, exceeded all conception, the chambers of the women being forced open, and ruffians having entered, whose very name they regarded with horror. On this rude treatment Philo dwells with his accustomed force and eloquence. He boldly asserts it to be founded in calumny; and proves it to be so, by the fact, that not a single weapon of destruction was found, after the most diligent search, in the possession of the Jews.

The Jews professed to believe in Jesus, as a Prince sent of God to emancipate them from servitude, and to erect among them the standard of universal freedom. This profession was, no doubt, considered by their enemies as a vain and insulting boast, who, in their turn, with more bitterness and poignancy, reminded them of their actual subjugation; and sometimes treated them as captives subject to the will of their conquerors, or as slaves at the disposal of their masters. The charge of being subject to the Romans, with which their adversaries stigmatized the Jews,

could not be denied; and the necessity of explaining the nature of the freedom in which they gloried, appears to be the real circumstance, which occasioned the two important publications of Philo, in behalf of the Jewish and Egyptian believers. He retorts upon their persecutors the imputation of slavery; and shews, that they were the worst of all slaves, by being the slaves of sin; and maintains, that the virtuous amongst the Jews, enjoyed the noblest and most perfect freedom, in consequence of being endued by the Son of God with the freedom of the soul. He asserts, that the man, whether Jew or Greek, whose mind is superior to the love of the world, and to the fear of death, and who by tortures could not be brought to commit a dishonourable deed, was free in the highest and most important sense, though a thousand despots might claim him as their slave*.

These refined and lofty sentiments did not originate with Philo. It formed a leading and fun-

* Εξ ὧν εναργεςατα παριςαται, το μητε τινα των σπουδαιων δουλον ειναι, καν μυριοι τα δεσποτων συμβολα προφεροντες επανατεινωνται. He adds, that no wicked man could be free, though he possessed the wealth or power of Crœsus or of Midas—μητε των αφρονων ελευθερον, καν Κροισος, η Μιδας, η ὁ μεγας βασιλευς ων τυγχανῃ. P. 885.

damental principle in the christian system. It was a saying of Jesus himself, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." The great apostle of the Gentiles reminds his brethren, that they have been called into *liberty*, and exhorts them to stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free: and for this reason the gospel is emphatically called the "perfect law of liberty."

Philo, as we have seen, asserts in his book against Flaccus, that the præfect published several edicts, to expel the Jews as strangers and intruders. To these edicts he seemingly alludes in the book, which he published in behalf of the christians; and the allusion shews, that in the same edicts they were proposed to be sold as slaves to the highest bidder. "The writings," says he, "entitled *the Sale*, are beneath ridicule and contempt, and sink under the magnanimity of the men against whom they are published, like blank waste paper, which age, or moth, or stain destroys*." In a subsequent page he adds,

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* Γελως ουν αν ειη και φλυαρια πολλη τα κατα τας λεγομενας ωνας γραμματα, επειδαν καθ' ὧν γραφεται παρευημερηθη σθενερωτερα δυναμει· χαρτιδιων αγραφων ακυρωτερα, ὑπο σητων, η χρονων, η ευρωτος ἁπαν διαφθαρησομενα.

" It is therefore meet, that good men should say to him who is about to buy them, ' Buy us, and we will teach thee sobriety of mind;' to him who threatens to banish us to a foreign clime, ' The whole earth is our country;' to him who deprives them of their goods, ' We are content with little. Nor are we inferior to those, who combat in the public games. They are not frightened with things like these; though they fight for a prize, which is hardly a shadow of our high reward, and which gives them only firmness and strength of body; whereas, the glory set before us arms us with strength of mind, and steels us against every sense of pain.'*"

Lastly. In the persecution of the christian Jews at Alexandria, we see the origin of *monas-*

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* Αξιον ουν και τῳ σπουδαιῳ προς μεν τον εχοντα ωνητικως, λεγειν, σωφροσυνην αρα αναδιδαχθητι· προς δε τον απειλουντα φυγην ὑπεροριαν, πασα γη μοι πατρις· προς δε τον την των χρηματων ζημιαν, αρκει μετρια βιοτα μοι· προς δε τον πληγας και θανατον επανατεινομενον, ου μορμυλεττεται με ταυτα· ουδε ειμι πυκτων και παγκρατιαστων ελαττων, οἱ τινες αμαυρα ειδωλα αρετης ὁρωντες, ατε σωματων αυτο μονον ευεξιαν διαπονησαντες, ἑκατερα τλητικως ὑπομενουσιν. ὁ γαρ ἡγεμων σωματος εν εμοι νους ανδρια τονωθεις, ὁυτω σφοδρα νενευρωται, ὡς επανω πασης αλγηδονος ἱστασθαι δυνασθαι. P. 887.

tic institutions. This is a subject of no less curiosity than importance; and we may draw the most unquestionable information respecting it from the authentic writings of Philo*. The Jews, when their houses were attacked, withdrew from the city, and sought in the wilderness, or in retired and solitary places, that peace and security, which their enemies had denied them in the midst of society. The first christians in Egypt and Palestine became monks and hermits from compulsion, and not from choice; and

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* The following account of Prideaux (vol. ii. 283.) expresses the opinion of protestants on this mistaken subject. "Christian monkism had its beginning about the year of our Lord 250. Paul, a young gentleman of the country of Thebais, in Egypt, to avoid the Decian persecution, fled to the adjoining desart, and fixing his abode in a cave there, first of all christians, began the practice of an ascetic life, in which he continued ninety years, being of the age of 113 at the time of his death. About twenty years after his thus retiring to this place, Antony, another young gentleman of the same province, being excited by the fame hereof to follow his example, retired to the same desart; and many others after a while, out of the like zeal of devotion, retiring to him, he formed them into a body, and became their abbot," &c. Mosheim (Eccles. Hist. vol. i. 275.) supposes the monastic life to have been the offspring of the *mystic theology* derived from the school of Plato; whereas he would have been much nearer the truth, if he had said, that the mystic theology was the offspring of the monastic life.

thus the gross superstition, which afterwards, from this source, disgraced christianity, originated in the violence and cruelties with which it was at first assailed.

The book of the Revelation, while in general it delineates the yet future state of the church, contains, in many parts, allusions to facts, which had already come to pass. Of this kind is the following passage, the force of which will be immediately felt, when compared with the account which Philo gives of the christians, and their escape to the wilderness to avoid persecution. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood, which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandment of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Chap. xii. 13.—The

dragon or serpent, which pursued the woman, stands for the people who worshipped it, namely, the Egyptians. And the earth helped the woman, that is, the christian church; and this not only because the believers found shelter in the wilderness, but as being given to agriculture, they derived from the earth the means of subsistence.

In the book concerning the christians, Philo has one passage, which is worthy to be translated in this place. The argument he uses supposes, that the men he was defending possessed very extraordinary fortitude and virtue; and he anticipates the question which the adversary might put, "Whether any men then existed, or ever had existed, that realized the character which he was delineating?" The author answers, "I may well reply, that, in former times, certain men flourished, who having God for their guide, excelled all their contemporaries in virtue; and who, living conformably to the divine law, which is also the law of reason and nature, not only became themselves free, but filled all around them with the same manly freedom. And in our own days there are men, who, as images of the same high original, have copied the fair and honourable conduct of those wise patriarchs. For we are not to suppose that, because the souls of our adversaries are themselves destitute of spi-

ritual freedom, as being the slaves of folly and bad passions, all men are incapable of the same elevated virtue. If such persons do not appear like flocks in vast numbers, it cannot be deemed strange: first, because great moral excellence, like every other excellence, is rare; and secondly, because they pursue truth in retirement, remote from vulgar eyes, wishing, if it be possible, to come forth and reform the world: for virtue by its very nature is disposed to benefit the community. But as they are not able to effect this laudable purpose, on account of the mad prejudices and vices, which have overspread society, and which have been deeply rooted in the public mind, they have retired, and in solitude sought shelter from the persecution, which, with the violence of a torrent, threatened to sweep them away. And we, if we have any zeal for reformation, should pursue them to their retreat, and supplicate them to return, that their presence might prove instrumental in healing the monstrous disorders, which, like wild beasts, overrun the community, offering them peace and liberty, and other earthly blessings, instead of assailing them with war and slavery, and other innumerable evils*."

* Επειδη δε τινες των ηκιστα συγκεχορευκοτων μουσαις εισθασιν ερωταν, τινες η προτερον γεγονασιν ανδρες, η νυν

This passage is taken from the book in which Philo speaks of the Esseans; and we here see the followers of Jesus placed in a very interesting

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εισι, ὁποιους αναπλαττεσθε; καλον γε αποκρινεσθαι· ὁτι και παλαι τινες ησαν, των καθ' ἀυτους ὁι αρετῃ διεφερον, ἡγεμονι μονῳ Θεῳ χρωμενοι, και κατα νομον, τον ορθον φυσεως λογον, ζωντες, ουκ ελευθεροι μονον, αλλα και τους πλησιαζοντας ελευθερου φρονηματος αναπιμπλαντες. και εφ' ἡμων αυτων ετι εισι ὡσπερ εικονες απο αρχετυπου γραφης, σοφων ανδρων καλακαγαθιας, τυπωθεντες. ου γαρ ει ἀι των αντιλεγοντων ψυχαι, κεχηρευκασιν ελευθεριας, ὑπ' αφροσυνος και των αλλων κακιων δουλαγωγηθεισαι, δια τουτο και το ανθρωπων γενος. ει δε μη κατα σιφη μεγαλα προιασιν αγεληδον, Θαυμαστον ουδεν· πρωτον μεν, ὁτι τα λιαν καλα, σπανια· ειτ' επειδη τον των εικαιοτερων εκτρεπομενοι πολυν ὁμιλον, Θεωρια των της φυσεως σχολαζουσιν· ευχομενοι μεν ει πως ενην επανορθωσασθαι τον βιον· κοινωφελες γαρ ἡ αρετη· το δε αδυνατουντες πλημμυρουντων κατα πολεις αλλοκοτων πραγματων, ἁ ψυχης παθη κακια συνηυξηθησαν αποδιδρασκουσιν, ὡς μη τῃ ῥυμῃ της φορας καθαπερ απο χειμαρρου βιας κατασυρειεν. ἡμεις δε, ει βελτιωσεως τις ζηλος ην, ικνηλατειν εδει τας τουτων καταδυσεις, και ἱκετας καθεζομενους παρακαλειν, ἱνα τεθηριωμενον τον βιον προσελθοντες εξημερωσωσιν· αντι πολεμου και δουλειας και κακων αμυθητων ειρηνην και ελευθεριαν και την αλλων αγαθων αφθονιαν περιρρεομενην απαγγειλαντες. P. 874. vol. ii. 455.

point of light. The degree of virtue which they had attained appeared incredible to those who opposed and persecuted them. They were the reformers and benefactors of the world. They wished, if possible, to live in the midst of society, and diffuse over it by their example and instruction the blessings of peace, order, and virtue. But the enemies of truth and virtue assailed them with war and slavery, and other innumerable evils, and they were obliged to seek shelter in solitude, lest they should be swept away by persecution as by an irresistible torrent. This is the flood which the author of the Revelation, in figurative language, represents the serpent as casting after the christian church, when flying into the wilderness, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. Philo well knew the debased state of the heathen world, in regard to virtue and real knowledge, and especially that of the Egyptians, in the midst of whom he lived. He speaks of it as a savage state, overrun with monstrous disorders, as with wild beasts: and in another place, he declares it impossible to reform men without the especial wisdom and assistance of God. He therefore supposes the holy men, of whom he speaks, to be possessed of this peculiar wisdom and assistance: and he earnestly prays for their return to society, that their presence might illumine and regenerate mankind.

This is a glorious and delightful representation of the character of the primitive christians; and powerfully concurs with a thousand other testimonies to set aside the account of Gibbon as false and calumnious, when he speaks of them as neither agreeable nor useful in this world, and represents their virtues as only a mean and timid repentance for former sins, and an impetuous zeal in supporting the reputation of a rising sect.

The friendly disposition which Claudius shewed towards the Jews, and the edicts which he sent to the provinces in behalf of them, proved the means of restoring those of Alexandria to their former rank and privileges in that city. But the causes which produced the disturbances and persecution under Flaccus, were followed by similar commotions after the death of that emperor. And Josephus has, in one place, given a short and transient account of the manner in which his countrymen were treated by the Egyptians. "At Alexandria," says he, "the natives were continually rising against the Jews, ever since Alexander, who perceived their readiness to assist him against the Egyptians, gave them, as a reward, the same privileges with the Grecians themselves. These privileges the Jewish people enjoyed uninterrupted under his successors, who appropriated to them a particular

portion of the city, that they might preserve their rites and modes of living untainted by mixing with foreigners. Even when the Romans became masters of Egypt, neither the first Cæsar, nor his immediate successors, wished to diminish the honourable privileges, which Alexander had bestowed on the Jews. Nevertheless, they had continual conflicts with the Grecians: and although the governors daily punished the principal disturbers in both parties, the tumult increased, till it was blown into a violent flame by the disorders which prevailed in other places. For when the Alexandrians held an assembly, to deliberate about an embassy intended to be sent to Nero, a number of the Jews assembled with them. The Greeks perceiving this, called them spies and enemies, and immediately laid violent hands on them. These, though they attempted to escape, were all put to death, except three men, whom they dragged away to burn them alive. But the Jews, collecting in their defence, at first assailed the Greeks with stones: they next rushed into the amphitheatre with torches in their hands, and threatened to burn their enemies to a man: and this they would have done, had not Tiberius Alexander, governor of the city, restrained their violence; which he attempted to do at first by sending, not the soldiers, but men respected by the Jews, to sooth

and persuade them, not to provoke the Roman army against them. The seditious disregarded these persuasions, and withal abused Tiberius." "Now when Tiberius perceived, that those who were for innovation would not be restrained, till they were severely punished, he brought out against them two legions, together with five thousand other soldiers, who happened just then to arrive for suppressing the Jews. These were permitted not only to kill the Jews, but to plunder their bodies, and to set fire to their houses. They accordingly rushed into that part of the city which is called *Delta*, and which the Jewish people inhabited, and there executed the orders given them, though not without loss on their own side. For the Jews, having embodied themselves, and placed those who were best armed in the front, bravely resisted for a long while; but at length giving way, they were destroyed without mercy: and their destruction was complete, some being caught in the open fields, and others forced into their houses, which were first plundered, and then set on fire by the Romans. No compassion was shewn to infants, nor to the aged; but persons of every age were slain without distinction, till the whole place overflowed with blood, and fifty thousand lay dead in heaps; nor would the remainder have been spared, if they had not begged for mercy. On

this, Alexander commiserated their condition, and ordered the Roman soldiers to retire, who being accustomed to obey orders, ceased to slaughter at the first intimation. But the populace of Alexandria, on account of their very great hatred to the Jews, were with difficulty withdrawn, being eager to continue in insulting over the bodies of the dead." J. W. Lib. 2. c. 18. 6, 7.

On this passage, it will be sufficient, if we make one or two observations. The object of the embassy proposed to be sent to Nero, was, no doubt, to complain against the Jews, who, continuing to preach the gospel, were daily making converts amongst the natives, and bringing the whole system of Egyptian superstition more and more into contempt. The Jews, therefore, had a right to attend this assembly, and to use their endeavours to prevent the measure from being carried. The Greeks and Egyptians appear to have been aware, that the Jews had reason and justice on their side. They therefore had recourse to force and violence, the only means to which men, actuated by deep-rooted bigotry and malice, usually resort in the absence of reason and justice.

The conduct of Alexander was at first humane and equitable, though he at last sanctioned the most savage cruelties. The narrative of Josephus, though himself a Jew, is as usual frigidly

correct and impartial. The great body of the Jews were disposed to listen to the persuasions of the governor, and to leave in the hands of Infinite Justice, the punishment of their enemies. But there were some who panted for innovation, and the intemperance of which they were guilty, involved themselves and all their nation in one common ruin. By *innovation*, the Jewish historian certainly means opposition to the Roman government. The innovators, therefore, were such of the Jews who, mistaking the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, were eager to throw off the Roman yoke, and to enlist under the banners of Jesus, whose return for the restoration of the Jews they were then earnestly expecting.

The enemies of the Jews, observing their dispersed and distressed condition, triumphantly urged, that the God whom they worshipped, so far from exercising a parental care over all mankind, neglected his own chosen people, when they had most need of his care and protection. The sufferers felt this plausible, but malicious argument, and Josephus and Philo have it in view throughout their writings; and while the former holds up Izates as a singular instance of the providence of God, in regard to those who believe and obey him, the latter observes, that the punishment of Flaccus furnished an irresistible

evidence that the Almighty did not really overlook his injured people *. He opens his book against *Caius* with the same consolatory truth: one passage of which, as referring apparently to the wonders lately exhibited by the mission of Jesus in behalf of the Jews and of all mankind, is worthy of our notice. It is to this effect: "The present times, and the many great and decisive events which have come to pass, though some affect to disbelieve the kind providence of God over all mankind, and especially over the nation which acknowledges and worships him, are sufficient to convince them of this truth †." The only great and decisive events, which happened at this period, calculated to prove the love or the providence of God, were the life and immortality brought to light in Judea. Other events, as they bespeak the sufferings and depression of the Jewish nation, tended rather to confirm the pre-

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* Τοιαυτα και Φλακκος επαθε, γενομενος αψευδεςατη πιςις του μη ὑπεροραςθαι των Ιουδαιων εθνος επικουριας της εκ Θεου.

† Πλην ὁ παρων καιρος, και αἱ κατ' αυτον κριθεισαι πολλαι και μεγαλαι ὑποθεσεις, καν απιςοι γεγονασι τινες του προνοειν το Θειον ανθρωπων, και μαλιςα του ἱκετικου γενους, ὁ τῳ πατρι και βασιλει των ὁλων και παντων αιτιῳ προσκεκληρωται, ἱκανα του πεισαι αυτους. P. 992.

judice of their enemies. Philo therefore could refer only to the christian revelation, and to the miracles exhibited in its support. This event contained a full and glorious assurance of the love and providence of God.

CHAPTER XV.

JOSEPHUS EDUCATED AS A CHRISTIAN—APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF GALILEE—HIS CAPTURE—HIS PRESERVATION.

JOSEPHUS has been deservedly held in high estimation for his learning and fidelity as a historian; but as his sentiments in respect to christianity are mistaken, he has not been regarded with that esteem and interest, to which he is entitled by his distinguished piety, humanity, and political wisdom. We cannot well peruse the works of Josephus, or review the scenes through which he has passed, without being convinced that he was raised by the special providence of God; and that the same providence which raised, also preserved him in circumstances, in which human skill or power must have proved inadequate to his preservation. The memoirs of his own life is an important and interesting document; though it contains little more than an account of his pub-

lic conduct, against the accusations of his rival, Justus of Tiberias.

Josephus was born of a noble family, his father being a priest of the highest order, and his mother a descendant of kings. He possessed, by nature, extraordinary powers of understanding and memory; and so early and successfully were they cultivated by his father, whom he represents as ennobled not less by his virtues than by his rank, that, at the age of fourteen, he attained high literary reputation, and was consulted on matters of importance in the politics, or points of dispute in the laws, of his country. About sixteen he determined to impose upon himself the severe task of studying the tenets, and practising the discipline of the three leading sects, into which the Jews were divided, thinking it then only practicable to chuse the best, after an impartial examination of them all. Nor was he satisfied even with this: for, "hearing," says he, "that a man named BANOUN, who used for food and raiment only the spontaneous productions of the ground, and who daily practised the rite of baptism, taught in the wilderness, I submitted to the severity of his discipline, and ranked with his followers. Having studied with him three years, I returned to Jerusalem, and commenced my political career as one of the pha-

risees, that sect which resembles the stoics among the Greeks*."

This is an important passage: according to his own account Josephus had studied among the Esseans, and finished his education with Banoun, who was of that number, as it appears from his name, his situation, and mode of living. Here he imbibed the spirit, and learnt the doctrine of christianity; and was qualified to become the future historian and apologist of its professors. It is of consequence to observe that, while christianity remained undistinguished from judaism, the Esseans were regarded not a distinct sect of Jews. They comprehended, as has been ob-

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* Περι εκκαιδεκα δε ετη γενομενος εβουληθην των παρ' ἡμιν αἱρεσεων πειραν λαβειν—ουτως γαρ ωμην αιρησεσθαι την αριστην, ει πασας καταμαθοιμι. σκληραγωγησας γουν εμαυτον, και πολλα πονηθεις, τας τρεις διηλθον. και μηδε την εντευθεν εμπειριαν ἱκανην εμαυτῳ νομισας ειναι, πυθομενος τινα Βανουν ονμα, κατα την ερημιαν διατριβειν, εσθητι μεν απο δενδρων χρωμενον, τροφην δε την αυτοματως φυομενην προσφερομενον, ψυχρῳ δε ὑδατι την ἡμεραν και την νυκτα πολλακις λουομενον προς ἁγνειαν, ζηλωτης εγενομην αυτου. *Life of Josephus.* 2.

The name *Banoun* is evidently the Hebrew בנין *banion the son of John.* His mode of life, as well as the rite of baptism, shews that he was a disciple of John; and perhaps he inculcated by the name that he was his successor.

served, the school of the prophets, and brought up young men of study and distinction, to fill the offices, and to sustain the professions of priests, scribes, and pharisees. They possessed only this name as a band of holy men studious of the law, and gradually receded into an independent society, after John had erected among them, on the foundation of Moses and the prophets, the standard of Jesus, and as spiritual judaism separated from the literal interpretation of the law. This observation accounts for the name Esseans, as a Jewish sect, not occurring in the New Testament, and is supported by the remarkable fact, that when our Lord first preached among them, the evangelist calls them not Esseans, but Pharisees. It also explains the reason why Josephus, after finishing his education among the Esseans, classed among the Pharisees on commencing his public life.

In the twenty-sixth year of his age, a circumstance occurred which remarkably displays the energy of his character, and his zeal as a disciple of Jesus. Some men, apparently Esseans*, but

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* Καθ ὁν χρονον Φηλιξ της Ιουδαιας επετροπευεν, ἱερεις τινας συνηθεις εμοι, καλους καγαθους, δια μικραν και την τυχουσαν αιτιαν δησας εις την Ρωμην επεμψεν, λογον ὑφεξοντας τῳ Καισαρι. 3. They seem to have been treated

priests by profession, distinguished by their piety, rank, and learning, were put in chains and sent to Rome, under some frivolous pretence, to answer for their conduct before Cæsar. Thither Josephus followed them at the hazard of his life and fortune, in order, if it were possible, to effect their deliverance by his address and influence with the emperor. The ship, in which he embarked, was foundered by night in the Adriatic; and Josephus, with eighty out of six hundred passengers, was picked up with the dawn, by a vessel of Cyrene, after having floated in the sea throughout the night. Having thus escaped, as he says, by the providence of God, he arrived in Rome; and being introduced by Aliturius, a player, but a Jew by birth, in favour with Nero and Pop-

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with great cruelty, their accustomed food being denied them. "Yet," says Josephus, "in the midst of their distresses, they relinquished not their piety towards God;" and this was one motive, why he hastened to their release. It will be remembered, that the apostle Paul was sent to Rome, in a similar manner, by this very Felix. From the honourable character of these priests, the severity of their treatment, the man of whom they received it, and the unwillingness of Josephus to specify the cause, which was but a mere pretence, we may conclude with confidence, that they were believers in Jesus; nor would he have made so great a sacrifice for their release, if they differed from him on a question, which was sufficient to dissolve the closest friendship and connection.

pæa, he had the great satisfaction of seeing his purpose fulfilled. The prisoners were set at liberty; and their benefactor, without loss of time, returned to Judea, having received handsome presents, as an additional pledge of the approbation and friendship of the empress.

When he reached home he found the flames of war already breaking out; and these flames he earnestly endeavoured to extinguish by allaying the animosities of his countrymen, and impressing on them the utter improbability of success against the tried valour, the steady discipline, and the superior fortune of their enemies. And it appears probable, that his authority and advice, seconded by a great proportion of the wise and peaceful, would have prevailed, if the Jews had not been re-animated, on one hand, by the partial defeat of Florus, which happened at this time, and exasperated, on the other, by the cruel and unprovoked hostilities of the people of Syria and of Scythopolis. The narrative of these hostilities, as brief and important, I will translate from the words of Josephus. "The people inhabiting the cities of Syria seized the Jews, who resided among them, and slew them with their wives and children, though they had not one complaint to make against them. But the inhabitants of Scythopolis exceeded all others in impiety and ferociousness: for when they were at-

tacked by the natives of Judea, they compelled the Jews residing among them to bear arms against their countrymen, which is deemed unlawful by us; and when by these unnatural auxiliaries, they defeated and repelled the assailants, they broke their pledge of friendship with the resident Jews, and put them all to death, to the amount of many ten thousands. The Jews of Damascus suffered a similar treatment, as I have related in the Jewish War: and I here mention this calamity merely to shew that the war of the Jews with the Romans, was, for the most part, a matter not of choice, but of compulsion*."

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* Οι τας περιξ της Συριας πολεις κατοικουντες, τους παρ' ἑαυτοις Ιουδαιους συλλαμβανουντες συν γυναιξι και τεκνοις ανηρουν, ουδε μιαν αυτοις αιτιαν επικαλειν εχοντες· ουτε γαρ επι Ρωμαιων αποσασει νεωτερον τι πεφρονηκεσαν, ουτε προς αυτους εκεινους εχθρον η επιβουλον. Σκυθοπολιται δε παντων ασεβεσατα και παρανομωτατα διεπραξαντο. επελθοντων γαρ αυτοις Ιουδαιων εξωθεν πολεμιων, τους παρ' αυτοις Ιουδαιους εβιασαντο κατα των ὁμοφυλων ὁπλα λαβειν, ὁπερ εστι παρ ἡμιν αθεμιτον, και μετ' εκεινων συμβαλοντες εκρατησαν των επελθοντων. επειδη ενικησαν, εκλαθομενοι της προς τους ενοικους και συμμαχους πιστεως, παντας αυτους διεχρησαντο, πολλας μυριαδας οντας. Josephus speaks of this event more fully in the Jewish War, lib. 2. c. 18. 2. He represents all Syria in the most dreadful commotion. It was divided into two camps, which spent

Here it is asserted that the Syrians, when they put the Jews with their wives and children to death, had nevertheless no complaint to make against them. It may be admitted, that they had no reason of a political nature for this cruelty. And this is all that Josephus means: for he adds, that they neither attempted to revolt from the Romans, nor meditated any insidious or hostile views against their neighbours. But it is utterly incredible, that the people of Syria, or any other people, should have committed so outrageous an act, without what they considered some great provocation: and this could be no other than what proved the innocent cause of the commotions in all other places, namely the introduction and prevalence of the gospel. This we have seen was the reason for which the Jews of Damascus suffered: and Josephus leads us by the connection, as well as by his studied silence, to conclude, that the sufferings of those in Syria and Scythopolis proceeded from the same source.

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the day in carnage, and the night in still more frightful alarm. The number of heathens converted to christianity in Syria at that time was so great, that they were objects of terror to the enemies of the Jews, απεσκευσθαι τους Ιουδαιους δοκουντες εκαστοι, τους Ιουδαιζοντας ειχον εν ὑποψια. These judaizers or proselytes could be no other than converts to spiritual judaism.

Galilee seems to have cherished beyond any of the other provinces, the hope of emancipation, and therefore more determined upon a revolt. This determination must have been owing to the predominance of the gospel in this country, and to the erroneous expectation of a temporal deliverance, which the claims of Jesus had awakened in the minds of the people *. Of this expectation certain demagogues, more enlightened, yet very depraved, availed themselves; who endeavoured by their speeches and influence to fan into flames the mistaken zeal of the public, in the hopes of promoting their own interests, while they pretended to consult the interests of the nation. Among these were John of Gischala, Jesus the son of Sapphias, and Justus of Tiberias, all able and powerful chieftains, especially the latter, who was withal artful, versed in the literature and language of Greece, and possessing by means of his eloquence an irresistible influence over the people. To defeat the measures of these incendiaries, and to arrest the progress of the war, by disarming the inhabitants, Josephus, with two other men

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* It is on this principle that Justus of Tiberias charged Josephus and the Galileans with being the authors of the war.—Αιτιοι γεγοναμεν εγω τε και Γαλιλαιοι τη πατριδι σου της προς Ρωμαιους και προς τον βασιλεα σασεως—65.

of rank and integrity, was sent by the council of Jerusalem as delegates to Galilee; being ordered to visit the several towns, and return to the sanhedrim a correct information of the state of the country. These orders being executed, Josephus was appointed governor of Galilee, with discretionary power, if he could not by any means terminate, to conduct the war. The rank and superior abilities of Josephus gave him a natural claim to the highest honour and confidence: but I cannot help thinking, but that his known predilection, as a believer in Jesus, to the cause of the Galileans, was felt by the sanhedrim to mark him out in a peculiar manner as a proper candidate for that appointment.

His first object was to provide arms, and to fortify the cities, but yet if possible to keep the country in peace. With this intention, he sought to conciliate the robbers; or those banditti, who, living on plunder, infested the several provinces, and especially Galilee. He allowed them a small stipend to prevent the necessity of plunder, and bound them, by a solemn oath, not to pillage the neighbouring towns, nor, by attacking, to provoke the Romans. To secure the obedience and fidelity of the Galileans, he collected around him the men in power, seventy in number; treated them with friendship and confidence, used their assistance and advice in deciding causes, while

passing from one city to another, being most anxious that every decision should be dictated by impartial justice, the result of time and deliberation, and uninfluenced by bribery and interest. "I was now," adds he, "in the thirtieth year of my age, a period in which it is difficult for any one invested with great authority to escape the calumnies of the envious, though he abstain from every unlawful desire. Yet I preserved every woman from insult or injustice, and rejected every present that was offered me, as not in need of gain. Nor would I receive the tithes, which were due to me as a priest, from the persons who brought them. For this reason it was, I believe, that God, who ever notices those who do as they ought, repeatedly delivered me from the hands of my enemies, and protected me in the many dangers, which soon menaced my life. This conduct, moreover, procured me the attachment of the people, whose affection and fidelity were such that, when their cities were taken and their wives and children carried into slavery, their anxiety for the preservation of their general was equal to the sense of their own calamities."

Josephus had more difficulties from the malice and envy of his rivals, than from the common envy; and his behaviour in every emergence, displays the highest wisdom and moderation. His life, indeed, must convince every impartial

reader, that he had drank deeply of the spirit of the gospel; and that his virtues procured him the special favour and protection of God. It would be both instructive and interesting to review the great events through which he passed in Galilee; but even a summary account of them would be too voluminous for our present purpose. I shall therefore notice only the close of his public life, as this part of his history is connected with two passages, which have been considered as utterly inconsistent with the character of a believer in Christ.

The siege of Jotapata makes a figure in the history of the Jewish War*, next to that of Jerusalem; and the capture of it, with its illustrious general, are connected with circumstances of so doubtful a nature as to require particular explanation. Josephus, when no longer able to withstand the Roman arms, retired with his army to this strong fortress. There he was pursued by Vespasian, who looked upon this retreat as the most fortunate event, as it offered to him the sure prospect of capturing the commander with all his army. Vespasian regarded Josephus not only as the ablest officer among the Jews, but as the very pillar on which their hopes of success chiefly de-

* The history of this siege occurs in J. W. lib. 3. c. 7, 8.

pended; and he expected to meet with no farther difficulties in the reduction of Judea as soon as he had that general in his power. The valour and fertility of invention with which Josephus defended the place, equalled at least the steady perseverance and experienced bravery with which the Romans pressed the siege; nor was the fortress ultimately taken, but by the treachery of a deserter, after a siege of forty-five days, aggravated by internal calamities of the most dreadful nature. The Romans smarting under the injuries inflicted on them by the besieged, and exasperated by their obstinacy, refused to give quarter; and they put all to the sword, except infants and the women. The captives and the slain, by the reduction of Jotapata, amounted to forty thousand.

The following pathetic incident, as it evinces the confidence and respect which the people had in Josephus, I shall relate in his own words. When he saw that the city could no longer be maintained, he meditated on some means of escaping. "But Josephus," writes he, "disguising his intention to provide for his own safety, assured the people that he was desirous to leave the city as the most likely measure to rescue them; for he could do them no service, while they were yet untaken, but wait their common ruin; whereas he might afford them material re-

lief, if he once escaped the siege, by collecting the Galileans in the country, and diverting the attention of the enemy. While he staid within, he afforded inducements to the Romans to press the siege more closely, whereas his flight might induce them to leave the fortress and pursue him. This representation, however, did not convince the people, but inflamed them the more to hang about him. Accordingly the children, the old men, and the women with their infants, flocked around him mourning, fell before him, and clinging to his feet, besought him with great lamentation not to depart, but to share to the last in their misfortunes: and this I think they did not from envy at my deliverance, but from the hope of their own. For they did not give up the expectation of being saved, as long as Josephus remained with them." He therefore yielded to their entreaties, assuring them, that he would rather die than leave them; and would partake in their calamities to the last, rather than join the Romans, though they might spare his life. Accordingly he resolved to defend the town to the last extremity; and he exhausted every resource which skill or valour could suggest, till treachery rendered farther resistance impossible.

As soon as the enemy was in possession of the city, the first object of Vespasian was to find and secure Josephus, for whom he caused diligent

search to be made among the living and among the dead. But their enquiry, as Josephus expressly states, was eluded by the special providence of God. For passing unobserved through the midst of the enemy, he leaped into a pit, which led to a den very spacious, and invisible to those who were above ground. Here he entered and found forty of the principal citizens concealing themselves with provisions sufficient to maintain them for many days. In this place he lay hid for some days, till his retreat was discovered by a woman leaving the den to seek pardon and protection of the enemy. Vespasian dispatched two tribunes to seize him, not, however, without the most solemn assurance of pardon. Josephus, nevertheless, mistrusting the fair promise made by the tribunes, refused to leave the den, till Nicanor, a confidential officer under Vespasian, and in former days an acquaintance of Josephus, came and persuaded him to surrender. And this was the critical moment in which life and death hung over him in equal balance; and I may say with confidence, that the Almighty never more signally interposed to save a human being, than at this time to preserve Josephus.

When the companions of his misfortunes perceived that he was willing to comply with the advice of Nicanor, they crowded around and thus accosted him—"The religion of our an-

cestors may now well sigh—that religion, which, under the sanction of God, steels our souls to the contempt of death. Art thou, Josephus, so fond of life, and canst thou bear to see the light in a state of slavery. How soon hast thou forgotten thyself, thou who hast persuaded many to die for liberty. Ill founded is thy fame for valour and for wisdom, if thou canst accept pardon from those against whom thou hast so zealously fought. But though the fortune of the Romans hath made thee forget thyself, we shall prevent thee from tarnishing thy glory. We offer thee our right hand, and a sword: and if thou wilt die willingly, thou wilt die as it becomes a leader of the Jews; but if unwillingly, thou shalt die as a traitor to them." Having said this, they began to brandish their swords at him, and threatened to kill him, if he thought of submitting to the Romans. To this Josephus made the following reply, which contains the profoundest and most powerful arguments against self-destruction which have ever been delivered; and which, if we consider the occasion on which they were uttered, evince at once the amazing depth of his understanding, and his extraordinary presence of mind. "Why, my friends, are we thus bent on killing ourselves; why determined to separate those ever dear companions, the soul and the body? Will any one presume to say that I am changed? The Ro-

mans full well know the contrary. It is a brave thing to die in war, provided we die according to the laws of war by the hands of the conqueror. If, therefore, I avoid death from the sword of the Romans, I truly deserve to meet it from my own sword and my own hand. But if they, from compassion spare an enemy, how much more ought we in mercy to spare ourselves? It is folly to inflict on ourselves those things, to avoid which we are at variance with them. To die for liberty, I grant, is honourable; but death is honourable only in war, when inflicted by those who would take away our liberty. In the present case our enemies neither fight nor destroy us. He is equally a coward who is unwilling to die when it is necessary, and he who is willing to die without necessity. What are we afraid of when we refuse to face the Romans? Is it not death? And shall we inflict with certainty on ourselves what we dread, if we but apprehend it from our enemies? But you will say, we must become slaves. And are we at present decidedly in a state of liberty? You may farther think it a manly act in one to kill himself. On the contrary, I think it a very unmanly action, as I should deem that pilot both a fool and a coward who would of his own accord sink his ship to avoid a storm. Self-murder is a crime repugnant to the feelings of every living creature, and an impious offence against

God our creator. For this reason no instance occurs of animals dying by means of their own contrivance; for the love of live is naturally implanted in all. Accordingly we deem those to be enemies, who openly take away our lives; and those who do it by treachery are punished for so doing. And do you not think that God is angry with that man, who throws away the favour which he has bestowed on him? For it is from him that we have received our being; and we ought to leave to his disposal the time and manner of taking it away. The bodies of men are indeed mortal as composed of corruptible matter; but the soul being a portion of the divinity dwelling within us, can never die. Besides, if a person destroys or abuse a thing received in trust from a man like himself, he is esteemed unjust and treacherous; and can we suppose that he who has received the highest trust from God, will be able to elude his notice and resentment. Moreover, the slaves who run away from their masters, though they may have proved an unjust master to them, are punished by our laws. And shall we attempt to run away from God, who is the best of all masters, and not think ourselves guilty of impiety? Do not you know that those who depart this life, and in conformity to the law of nature, restore the deposit received from God, when it pleases him to recal it, enjoy eternal

fame; that their abodes and posterity are blessed; that their souls are pure and obedient, obtaining a most holy place in heaven, where, after the revolution of ages, they shall again be reunited with incorruptible bodies*; while the souls of those who madly lift their hands against themselves, are received by the darkest place in hades. And because this crime is hated by God, it is punished by our most wise legislator: the the bodies of those who destroy themselves being exposed unburied till sun-set, while our laws allow even enemies the rite of burial. The laws of other nations enjoin that the self-murderer, when dead, should have his hand cut off, which he had used, when alive, in destroying himself, indicating, that as the hand is thus violently alienated from the body, so the body has been violently alienated from the soul. Let us, therefore, my friends, follow reason, and not add to the calamities, which men bring upon us, impiety towards God. Reason and nature call upon us to preserve ourselves. Nor is it in any wise inglorious to be preserved by those our enemies, to

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* Here Josephus clearly expresses his belief in the resurrection of the body, as taught in the gospel. Καθαραι δε και επηκοοι μενουσιν αι ψυχαι, χωρον ουρανου λαχουσαι τον αγιωτατον, ενθεν εκ περιτροπης αιωνων αντενοικιζονται σωμασιν. J. W. lib. 3. c. 8. 5.

whom we have given so many proofs of our courage. At least, if we be determined to die, it is fit that we die by the hands of those who have conquered us."

"Thus did Josephus use every argument to dissuade them from destroying themselves. But despair had closed their ears against reason; and, as though they had already been devoted to death, they became more obstinately bent upon dying. Surrounding him with their naked swords, they rushed upon him, each branding him as a coward, and in an attitude to stab him. But Josephus addressed one by name, threw on another the looks of a commander, took a third by the hand, softened a fourth by supplication, and thus, though distracted by various emotions, he disarmed them all, and averted the fatal blow, directing his attention as a wild beast, when encircled by assailing crowds, principally to the man who pressed him closest. Even in this extremity the assailants still revered him as their general; and some of them, as if their right hands became palsied, dropt the uplifted sword, while many of them, unsolicited, suspended the blow with which they aimed to fell him."

"In this awful crisis Josephus was not forsaken by his usual presence of mind: but committing to God the protection of his life, he added, "Since you are resolved to die, let us de-

termine our mutual slaughter by lot; and let the first allotted fall by him, whose lot will come next to die. Thus we shall all perish in succession, without the guilt of self-destruction, except the survivor, who with justice may preserve himself. The proposal met their approbation; and Josephus committed his lot with theirs. The person, whose lot was first drawn, readily exposed his breast to the man that was next to succeed him; for he thought death itself sweeter than life, as Josephus was to die after him. Yet Josephus, whether we should ascribe it to chance, or to divine providence, was left with another to the last: and as he was anxious neither to fall by the lot, nor if he were the survivor, to stain his hands with a kindred's blood, he persuaded him to confide in the Romans and live. "And thus," adds our author, "Josephus having survived the war with the Romans, and this war with his friends, was conducted to Vespasian, who commanded, that he should be closely guarded, in order to be sent to the emperor Nero. When Josephus heard this command, he thus accosted Vespasian, 'Thou expected, O general, to find a mere captive in Josephus. But I approach thee as the herald of great tidings; and if I had not been sent of God, I should have died, as a general ought to die who knows the Jewish laws. Why shouldst thou send me to Nero? He is no more. The empire

claims thee for his successor. Thou, O Vespasian, art Cæsar, thou and thy son confine me now in still closer chains, and preserve me for thyself: for thou, O Cæsar, art lord, not only over me, but over land and sea, and all mankind: and I deserve still greater punishment, if I falsely affirm any thing of God.' Then one of Vespasian's attendant's asked him, 'If this be not an artifice to avert the terror which await him, how came he not to foresee the capture of Jotapata and his own captivity.' To this Josephus answered, "I did foretel the people of Jotapata that the city would be captured on the forty-seventh day, and that I should be taken alive by the Romans.' Vespasian privately interrogated the captives about these predictions, and found them to be true."

Here Josephus declares in the most solemn manner, that God had authorized him to assure Vespasian, that he would be soon emperor; and the assurance was fulfilled by means in which he could have no concern. He professes also to have already given a very exact prediction of the fall of Jotapata, attested by some captives, who were examined without the knowledge of Josephus. Candour requires, that declarations so solemn, so specific, and made by so respectable a writer, should not be disbelieved. The illustrious historian of the Jews was not a juggler, or

a vain pretender. His love of truth appears almost in every page of his voluminous writings; nor can a single instance be found, in which he seems to arrogate qualities that did not belong to him. The arduous scenes through which he passed shew, that he possessed in an eminent degree the virtues of the gospel—patience under trials, forbearance towards his enemies, compassion for the unfortunate, generosity towards the vanquished, and though a general, an earnest desire to prevent the effusion of human blood. Every step of his public career led through snares and dangers which menaced his life. With true christian fortitude he committed himself, on every trying occasion, to the hands of God: and if we reflect on the innumerable perils which assailed him from friends and foes, from the war in Galilee, at the siege of Jerusalem, within the den of Jotapata, and even in the court of Cæsar, we must be convinced, that the shield of providence was in an especial manner spread to protect him.

The great end to be answered by his preservation was worthy the interposition of heaven. The blessed Jesus had foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, as the ultimate proof of his divine mission, and the final pledge of his second coming. If the wisdom of God thought fit to foretel that event, it could not have been unworthy the

power of God to preserve a competent person to be a witness of its completion, and to transmit with incontrovertible evidence the knowledge of it to remote countries, and to all future ages. The apostles of Christ, in preaching the gospel, were largely endowed with assistance from above. To Josephus the greater part of them must have been personally known: he had been brought up in their school: he heard their doctrines, witnessed their conduct, imbibed their spirit, and though destined to act a very different part, he powerfully co-operated in the same sacred cause. Is it then incredible, that God should have vouchsafed to preserve Josephus by a portion of that supernatural wisdom, which confessedly illumined those good men who were engaged in the same arduous enterprize. We are therefore free to believe on rational evidence, that the assurance Josephus in the name of God gave Vespasian, and which was immediately realized, actually proceeded from the inspiration of the Almighty*.

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* When Josephus was on one hand assailed by the Romans, and on the other sinking under the envy and perfidy of his rivals, he professes to have been animated by a divine communication. His words are to this effect: "When on my bed, grieved and distressed, one stood before me, and said, Cease to afflict thy soul, and banish thy fear. Thy

The other passage is as follows. "Whoever reflects on these things will find, that God has tender regard for men, and admonishes them in various ways of the means of safety; but that they perish by those evils, which they madly, and of their own accord, bring upon themselves. For the Jews, by demolishing the palace of Antonio, rendered the temple *a square*, though they knew it to be written in their oracles, that the holy city would be taken, when the temple

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sorrows will prove thy greatest joy, and thou shalt prosper in all things. Be not, therefore, weary. Remember thou hast to fight with the Romans." *Life of Josephus*, 42. This vision is very like those which St. Paul professes to have often received. "The Lord, in a vision of night, said to Paul, Do not fear, but speak and be not silent: for I am with thee, and no one shall lay hands on thee to afflict thee." Acts xviii. 9. "I would not," says Jortin, in his Remarks, vol. i. p. 36. "willingly be imposed upon, or impose upon the reader; but I leave it to be considered, whether in all this there might not be something extraordinary, as both Vespasian and Josephus were designed and reserved for extraordinary purposes, to assist in fulfilling and justifying the prophecies of Daniel and of our Lord. The same providence, which raised up and conducted Cyrus, and preserved the rash Macedonian conqueror from perishing, till he had overthrown the Persian empire, that the prophecies might be accomplished, might take the *Roman emperor* and the *Jewish writer* under a singular protection, for reasons of no less importance."

should assume that form. But what chiefly instigated them to engage in this war was, an ambiguous prophecy found in their sacred writings, that some one of that country would govern the world. The Jews applied this prediction to themselves, and many of their wise men were hence deceived in their judgment. But the oracle then denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea. But it is impossible for men to escape the punishment that is pre-ordained, though they see it beforehand. For the Jews wantonly perverted some, and derided others, of the warnings given them, until the capture of the city, and their own ruin, evinced their madness*."

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* Ταυτα τις εννοων ευρησει, τον μεν θεον ανθρωπων κηδομενον, και παντοιως προσημαινοντα τῳ σφετερῳ γενει τα σωτηρια, τους δε ὑπ' ανοιας και κακων αυθαιρετων απολλυμενους· ὁπουγε Ιουδαιοι και το ἱερον κατα την καθαιρεσιν της Αντωνιας τετραγωνον εποιησαντο, αναγεγραμμενον εν λογιοις εχοντες, ἁλωσεσθαι και την πολιν και τον ναον, επειδαν το ἱερον γενηται τετραγωνον· το δε επαραν αυτους μαλισα προς τον πολεμον, ην χρησμος αμφιβολος εν τοις ἱεροις ευρημενος γραμμασιν, ὡς κατα τον καιρον εκεινον, απο της χωρας τις αυτων αρξει της οικουμενης. τουτο ὁι μεν ὡς οικειον εξελαβον, και πολλοι των σοφων επλανηθησαν περι την κρισιν. εδηλου δ' ΑΡΑ περι

Josephus, as Theodoret informs us, wrote a comment on the prophecies of Daniel, in which his object appears to have been to determine the exact time of the Messiah's advent, and thus to enforce the truth of the gospel. The learned Jews, since the time of our Lord, have denied the prophetic authority of Daniel; whereas Josephus extols him, saying, that Daniel surpassed all the other prophets, because he not only predicted good things, but defined the exact time of their fulfilment*. This prophet predicts two periods, in which the Son of Man was to appear: the first, to reveal the gospel, and to tri-

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την Ουεσπασιανου ἡγεμονιαν, αποδειχθεντος επι Ιουδαιας αυτοκρατορος. αλλα γαρ ου δυνατον ανθρωποις το χρεων διαφυγειν, ουδε προορωμενοις. ὁι δε και των σημειων, ἁ μεν εκριναν προς ἡδονην, ἁ δ' εξουθενισαν, μεχρις ὁυ τη τε ἁλωσει της πατριδος, και τῳ σφων αυτων ολεθρῳ, διηλεχθησαν την ανοιαν. J. W. lib. 6. c. 5, 6.

* Non enim futura solum, quemadmodum alii prophetæ, Daniel prædicebat sed etiam tempus, quo illa eventura essent, definiebat. See Theodoret, at the close of his Commentary on Daniel. He has quoted these words from A. J. lib. x. c. 11. 7; and it is remarkable, that Josephus regarded Daniel as having predicted the final destruction of the Roman empire, but does not relate it, lest he should give offence. This is the source whence the early christian writers derived the expectation, that the Roman power was to be destroyed.

umph over his enemies in the destruction of the Jewish state; the second, to establish on the earth, when renovated, an everlasting kingdom of peace and righteousness. This distinction Josephus had learnt in the school of Christ, and taught it as the commentator of Daniel. And when he says that the oracle *then* denoted the government of Vespasian, we are to understand him as saying, that it received its literal and primary fulfilment in him. Hence he calls it *ambiguous*, that is, capable of being applied to this agent of God in destroying the Jewish community; and then in a more remote and complete sense to that spiritual Prince, who is again to appear, and reign over his revived and glorified subjects, with new heavens and a new earth. With this secondary, Josephus evidently contrasts the primary application, when he says, "The oracle THEN denoted the government of Vespasian, who was chosen emperor in Judea:" and that he represents the prophecy as fulfilled in Vespasian only so far as he was an earthly conqueror, and an instrument in the hands of God to destroy the then wicked Jews, is evident from the following clause: "But it is impossible for men to escape the punishment pre-ordained to them, though they see it beforehand. For the Jews wantonly perverted some of those warnings, and derided others of them, until the

destruction of the city, and their own ruin, evinced their madness." And the meaning of the whole is simply this, "So far was the oracle from predicting a temporal prince, who should rescue the Jewish nation from the Roman yoke, that it was fulfilled in Vespasian, whom God raised to the empire in Judea, the more exactly to accomplish the prophecy, by punishing the inhabitants of that country, as their crimes most richly deserved, with slavery and death."

Our author farther writes, that *many* of their wise men expected some one of that country to govern the world, and were mistaken in their judgment. There were *others* then among the wise, who did *not* thus expect a temporal deliverer, a worldly conqueror; and who therefore were *not* mistaken in their judgment. These were the followers of the Prince of Peace, who interpreting the prophecies in a spiritual sense, considered them as fulfilled in Jesus, who is already come to deliver them from sin, to conquer death, and will hereafter come to establish on the earth the kingdom of God. And it is evident, that Josephus here ranks himself with these, in opposition to those of the wise who expected a temporal deliverance.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE USE WHICH TACITUS MADE OF THE WRITINGS OF JOSEPHUS.

JUSTUS of Tiberias published an account of the Jewish war; and he charged Josephus and the Galileans with being the authors of it. Though his narrative abounded with falsehoods and misrepresentations, he pretended to have treated that subject with more fidelity than our historian. For his pretensions in this respect Josephus apostrophises him in one part of his life. And as his address places in a very remarkable light the testimonies which accredit his writings, I here subjoin one part of it. "I cannot but admire thy impudence for saying, that thou hast published a better account of these things than all others. Thou wast not acquainted with the affairs of Galilee: for thou wast with the king at Barytes; nor with the events of the siege of Jotapata, because no one that might inform thee, survived the destruction of that town. Nor was it possible for thee to have been better informed respecting the siege of Jerusalem; for thou wast not

present during its progress; nor hast thou perused the commentaries of Vespasian. This is clear; because thy narrative contradicts that of Cæsar. If thou hast written better than any other, why didst thou not publish thy writings, especially as thou hast composed them twenty years ago, while Vespasian and Titus, the generals of this war, also Agrippa and his friends, men deeply versed in Grecian literature, were living. The accuracy of thy publications would then have been attested by persons who knew the truth. But they are no longer among the living, and thou hast brought thy writings to light without any apprehension from them. I have acted quite otherwise in regard to my history. I dedicated my works to the emperors, while the facts were yet fresh in their memories; and to many others, who had been personally engaged in the war, such as Agrippa, and some others related to him. Being conscious that I have recorded the truth, I expected their sanction. The emperor Titus most readily confirmed my narrative; and subscribing his name to my books, ordered them to be published. King Agrippa also wrote me sixty-two letters on the subject, in all which he bears testimony to my veracity*."

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* Life of Josephus, 65.

This is a remarkable and important passage. The writings of Josephus contain internal proofs of accuracy and fidelity; and they were held forth to the public as faithful and accurate by the most competent witnesses—by the Roman generals and the governors of Judea, who had been witnesses of all the transactions recorded by him. This was a circumstance, which must have made him more known to the Romans; and rendered him an object of study and attention to those historians, who had to advert to the affairs of the Jews. In the number of these was *Tacitus*, who had perused and copied Josephus, except where his hatred of the Jews induced him to follow false, but to him more agreeable guides. Few things serve to place in a clearer light the great truths of christianity than the circumstance, that this historian had read Josephus, and felt unable to contradict him. To shew the use which Tacitus has made of the Jewish historian, I will cite one passage from the history of the Jews.

"Portents and prodigies announced the ruin of the city; but a people blinded by their own national religion, and with rancour detesting the religion of other states, held it unlawful by vows and victims to deprecate the impending danger. Swords were seen glittering in the air; embattled armies appeared; and the temple illumined

by a stream of light, that issued from the heavens. The portal flew open, and a voice more than human denounced the immediate departure of the Gods. There was heard at the same time a tumultuous and terrific sound, as if superior beings were actually rushing forth. The impression made by these wonders fell on a few only; the multitude relied on an ancient prophecy, contained, as they believed, in books preserved by the priests, by which it was foretold, that in this very juncture the power of the east would prevail over the nations, and a race of men would go forth from Judea to extend their dominion over the rest of the world. The prediction, however couched in ambiguous terms, related to Vespasian, and to his son Titus. But the Jewish nation was not to be enlightened. With the usual propensity of men ready to believe what they ardently wish, the populace assumed to themselves the scene of grandeur, which the fates were preparing to bring forth. Calamity itself could not open their eyes*."

Now it is maintained, that Tacitus has, with

* Tacit. Histor. lib. 5. 13. *Murphy's Translation.* The passage in Josephus, whence these facts are taken, occurs in J. W. lib. 6. c. 5. 3. 4. A part of the context is quoted above.

such variations only as an enemy would naturally have adopted, copied this paragraph from the Jewish historian, and therefore must have perused his works. For the portents announcing the ruin of the city, related by Tacitus, are related in the Jewish War, and related exactly in the same *order*. Josephus asserts, that the Jews regarded some of those signs as omens in their favour, and perverted others conformably to their own wishes; and that they were betrayed into the war by the hope of universal empire, under a temporal prince predicted by the divine oracles. Tacitus makes the same assertion. "With the usual propensity of men ready to believe what they ardently wish, the populace assumed to themselves the scene of grandeur, which the fates were preparing to bring forward." The application which Josephus makes of the Jewish prophecy to Vespasian, was too flattering to the prejudices of Tacitus to be omitted by him: he therefore mentions the fact; but understanding that Josephus holds forth the oracle as applying to two persons, he endeavours to preclude its secondary application to Jesus Christ, by introducing Titus, as well as Vespasian, as the object of its fulfilment. If we may judge from Josephus's own narrative, he was more partial to Titus than to Vespasian; and if his object was

to ingratiate himself with those princes, he would assuredly have represented the former, as well as the latter, as accomplishing the divine oracle. But Josephus had a just and solemn end to answer. The wise Disposer of human events authorized two of his most eminent servants to foretel the destruction of the Jewish community; and the Great Being who predicted the end, must have appointed the means of its fulfilment: and Josephus is within the letter of the truth, when he says, that the oracle denoted the government of Vespasian, who was made emperor in Judea. Tacitus indeed does not say that Josephus is the author of this declaration, nor does he even mention his name; but the cause of his silence may be easily assigned. This writer cherished the most inveterate malice against the Jews, which must have necessarily rendered him unwilling to acknowledge his obligations to one of that nation.

The Egyptians naturally envied the Jews the honour of being the first to raise the views of Vespasian to the throne of Cæsar; and they were led by the same motive to wish, that when come to Alexandria, he should receive from the tutelary god of Egypt, as well as from the God of Israel, some indication of his future royalty. To this envy, awakened by the Jewish oracles in favour of Vespasian, we owe the following

falsehoods*, gravely recorded by Tacitus: "Vespasian was now determined to visit the sanctuary of Serapis, in order to consult the god about the future fortune of the empire. Having given orders to remove all intruders, he entered the temple. While he adored the deity of the place, he perceived, in the midst of his devotion, a man of principal note among the Egyptians advancing behind him. The name of this person was *Basilides*, who at that moment was known to be detained by illness at the distance of several miles. Vespasian enquired of the priests, whether they had seen Basilides that day in the temple. He asked a number of others, whether they had met him in any part of the city. At length, from messengers whom he dispatched on horseback, he received certain intelligence, that Basilides was no less than fourscore miles distant from Alexandria. He concluded, therefore, that the gods had favoured him with a preternatural vision; and from the import of the word *Basilides*, he inferred an interpretation of the decrees of heaven in favour of his future reign."

* As the whole of this was an imposture, adjusted between Vespasian and the priests, it was transacted in private, all the people being excluded from the temple.—Arceri templo cunctos jubet.

"Vespasian passed some months at Alexandria, having resolved to defer his voyage to Italy till the return of summer, when the winds blowing in a regular direction, afford a safe and pleasant navigation. During his residence in that city, a number of incidents out of the ordinary course of nature seemed to mark him as the peculiar favourite of the gods. A man of mean condition, born at Alexandria, had lost his sight by a defluxion in his eyes. He presented himself before Vespasian, and falling prostrate on the ground, implored the emperor to administer a cure for his blindness. He came, he said, by the admonition of *Serapis*, the god whom the Egyptians hold in the highest veneration. The request was, that the emperor with his spittle would condescend to moisten the poor man's face, and the balls of his eyes. Another, who had lost the use of his hands, inspired by the same god, begged that he would tread on the part affected. Vespasian smiled at a request so absurd and wild. The wretched objects persisted to implore his aid. He dreaded the ridicule of a vain attempt; but the importunity of the men, and the crowd of flatterers, prevailed upon the prince not entirely to disregard their petition. He ordered the physicians to consider among themselves, whether the blindness of the one, and the paralytic affection of the other,

were within the reach of human assistance. The result of the consultation was, that the organs of sight were not so injured, but that by removing the film or cataract the patient might recover. As to the disabled limb, by proper applications and invigorating medicines, it was not impossible to restore it to its former tone. The gods, perhaps, intended a special remedy, and chose Vespasian to be the instrument of their dispensations. If a cure took place, the glory of it would add new lustre to the name of Cæsar; if otherwise, the poor men would bear the jests and raillery of the people. Vespasian, in the tide of his affairs, began to think, that there was nothing so great or wonderful, nothing so improbable or even incredible, which his good fortune would not accomplish. In the presence of a prodigious multitude, all erect with expectation, he advanced with an air of serenity, and hazarded the experiment. The paralytic hand recovered its functions, and the blind man saw the light of the sun. By living witnesses, who were actually on the spot, both events are confirmed at this hour, when deceit and flattery can hope for no reward*."

In the first of these paragraphs Tacitus incul-

* Tacit. Hist. lib. 5, 81, 82.

cates, that Basilides was one of the principal men in Egypt, and that he was a priest of Serapis. But in truth he had been a slave, and was at this very time a freedman of Vespasian*: and the Roman historian has falsified this account of him, in order to form a more exact counterpart to Josephus, who was a leading man and a priest among the Jews; thus making it appear, that Serapis, no less than the God of Israel, foresaw and foretold by his minister the future elevation of Vespasian. From the appearance or vision of Basilides in the temple, the priests taught that emperor to infer the decrees of heaven in favour of his future reign. This is a fiction, and a fiction too very contemptible, founded on the name of Basilides, which in Greek means the *form or appearance of a king.*

Tacitus, I have already observed, understood that Josephus, when speaking of the oracle being fulfilled in Vespasian, alludes to its ultimate and more complete fulfilment, in the second coming of Christ: and his object is to undermine this opinion, by opposing to our Lord Serapis, the tutelar divinity of Egypt. His design is more evident from the section following, in

* Suetonius is my authority for this fact—Basilides libertus obtulisse ei visus est. Vespas. 7.

which he accounts for the origin of *Serapis;* and in which he insinuates, that Jesus before his ascension came *to destroy* his own community, whereas Alexandria, by the advent and under the auspices of Serapis, would become a city flourishing and great among the nations. The passage is too important to be omitted. "Concerning the origin of the god Serapis, the account given by the priests of Isis is as follows. At the time when Ptolemy, the first of the Macedonian race, who settled the government of Egypt, had raised walls and ramparts to defend the new-built city of Alexandria, and afterwards gave a temple, and rites of national worship, a youth of graceful mien, and size above the human form, appeared to him in a midnight vision, commanding him to send some of his trusty friends as far as Pontus, to bring from that place into Egypt the statue of the preternatural being then before him. By his compliance with those directions, the prosperity of the whole kingdom would be advanced, and the city, which should be so happy as to possess that valuable treasure, would be great among the nations. In that instant, the youth was seen mounting to heaven in a column of fire." I need not apprize my readers, that the last sentence is opposed to the ascension of Christ, as related in the first chapter of the Acts. Tacitus has, unluckily for him,

noticed one material circumstance, namely, that he was the first author* who has thus recorded among the Romans the advent of Serapis in Egypt, and his ascension into heaven. We have, therefore, sufficient ground for concluding, that the story was fabricated after the promulgation of the gospel, in order to set aside the miracles on which it is founded.

Tacitus had read the testimony which Josephus, in his Jewish Antiquities, bears to the wisdom, the wonderful works, and the love of truth, which distinguished Jesus Christ. He knew that the same things were attested by multitudes besides in every country, and were so generally believed, that they could not be contradicted with effect. The Roman historian, therefore, prudently declined to call their truth in question; and he attempts to set aside the miracles of Jesus, or to render the belief of them unavailing, by ascribing similar wonders to Serapis, acting through the instrumentality of Vespasian. The blessed Jesus extended his tender regard principally to the poor, and he once healed a man having a withered hand in the presence of his enemies. He also gave eyes, by merely putting spittle upon them, to one known

* Origo Dei nondum nostris auctoribus celebrata, lib. 4. 83.

to have been born blind. These and his other miracles he performed when surrounded by multitudes, among whom were his enemies; and we have reason to believe, that he wrought all his wonderful cures with a tender, tranquil, and serene mind, without ostentation or tumult*. He simply in the name of, and with the authority of God, gave his command; and the effect, or the cure of the patient, instantly followed.

Tacitus ascribes to Vespasian the same cures, marked by similar circumstances; and he enforces the belief of them by saying, that the blind man was *known* to have had defluxion in his eyes; that the prince complied with the petition of the supplicants in the presence of a *multitude*, eager to know the event†.

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* When our Lord healed the multitude, he charged them not to make him public: and the evangelist adds, "That it might be fulfilled what is spoken by the prophet, And I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall announce victory to the Gentiles; nor will he contend, nor cry, nor shall any hear his voice in the streets." Matt. xii. 16.

† Oculorum tabe NOTUS—erecta, quæ astabat, multitudine. The two miracles to which these of Vespasian are more directly opposed, occur in John ix. and Mark iii. 5. In the first of these miracles, the patient is brought forward, as known by neighbours and others to have been born blind, ver. 8; and Jesus moreover is represented as putting spittle and clay on his eyes. In the second it is related, And Jesus

Though it is not my immediate object to examine the writings of Tacitus, I think it advisable to produce from him such passages as are connected with the subject of the present volume. In his annals, we meet with the following paragraph. "In the same year, the lust of the women was restrained by a severe decree of the senate, which prohibited any from living by prostitution, whose grandfather, father, or husband was a Roman knight: for Vistilia, born of a noble family, had divulged among the ædiles the licentiousness of her conduct. But they did not punish her, thinking that a sufficient punishment was inflicted on the unchaste by the very nature of the prostitution they profess. It was, however, demanded of *Titidius Labeo*, the husband of Vistilia, why he did not avail himself of the vengeance of the law against his wife, manifestly detected of such flagitiousness. And while he pretended that the sixty days allowed him for enquiring into her conduct, were not yet expired, they decreed that the enquiry already made, furnished sufficient evidence of her crime, and she absconded, having fled to the island of Seriphos.

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said to the man, Stretch forth thy hand, and he stretched it, and it became whole." To this the very language of Tacitus bears a close resemblance. Jussa exsequitur, statim conversa ad usum manus, cæco reluxit dies.

A motion was also made for the expulsion of the Jewish and Egyptian rites, by which it was decreed that four thousand of that slavish race, should be conveyed to the island of Sardinia, there to be restrained from robberies; where, if they perished through the severity of the climate, the loss would not be great; that the rest of them should leave Italy, unless within an appointed time they would relinquish their profane rites *."

We have already examined the account which Josephus has given of the transactions, here alluded to by the Roman historian; and it has been proved, I presume, by arguments no longer to be questioned, that the Jews, who thus suffered, were believers in Jesus. From the Jewish historian, we learn, that the wicked Jew, in pretending to teach the gospel at Rome, or, as Josephus calls it, the *wisdom* of the Mosaic laws, associated with the Egyptian priests, and this unnatural union was the cause of the Egyptians and Jews becoming objects of resentment to the Roman senate. Tacitus expressly asserts, that the design of the government, in banishing the Jews and Egyptians, was the abolition of their rites. This act of severity was a direct violation

* Tacit. Annal. lib. 2. ad finem.

of the policy usually shewn by the Romans; and the cause of this extraordinary change is only to be found in the prevailing genius of christianity, in the inflexible zeal of its first propagators, and in the menacing aspect which, at first, it assumed in respect to the Roman power, and to the Gentile superstition.

Tacitus insinuates, that the Jews were all *robbers*, and that they were sent to Sardinia to be restrained from the crimes of which they were thus guilty. In Josephus, however, we learn a far more probable tale, namely, that the Jews were thus treated for the wickedness of four men, who were agents in propagating the new religion, and who disgraced it by their immoralities.

The women, whose licentiousness the senate endeavoured to correct by a new law, were Roman matrons of rank and family, who had received the gospel on its first introduction in Rome, and who frequented the temple of Isis, where some of them, it is to be feared, were guilty of the enormities which Tacitus imputes to Vistilia. But he is too prejudiced a writer to be believed without evidence. The charge, as told by him, bears the clearest marks of malice and contradiction. The senate, it seems, were so tender of the honour of *Titidius Labeo*, as to demand the punishment of his wife. He, on the other hand, endeavours to evade the accusation;

which clearly proves his conviction of her innocence. The accusers would not at first punish her, as thinking that a sufficient punishment is inflicted on the unchaste by the very nature of the prostitution they professed. They then altered their minds, and threatened to punish the husband, for not punishing a wife, whom he loved and protected, and who was probably entitled to his love and protection: and finding him unwilling to proceed against her, they decreed that any farther enquiry was unnecessary!! So absurd and incoherent is intolerance, when determined to calumniate and oppress innocence.

Of another lady, who at this time, or soon after, became a convert to christianity, Tacitus speaks with more candour.

"And Pomponia Græcina, a lady of eminent quality, married to Plautius, who, on his return from Britain, had the honour of an innovation, being accused of practising a foreign superstition, was referred to the cognizance of her husband. And he, according to ancient institution, in the presence of the family, sat in judgment upon the life and reputation of his wife, and pronounced her innocent. Pomponia lived to a great age, and in perpetual sorrow, after the death of Julia, daughter of Drusus, procured by the intrigues of Massalina. For the space of forty years she wore no habit but that of mourning, nor

admitted any sentiments but those of grief. And this behaviour, which, in the reign of Claudius, escaped with impunity, afterwards turned to her glory." Ann lib. 13. c. 32.

I shall next adduce from Tacitus the well-known passage, in which he notices the christians as falsely accused by Nero. "The next care was to propitiate the gods. The Sibylline books were consulted, and the consequence was, that supplications were decreed to Vulcan, to Ceres, and to Proserpine. A band of matrons offered their prayers and sacrifices to Juno, first in the Capitol and next on the nearest margin of the sea, where they supplied themselves with water to sprinkle the temple, and the statue of the goddess. A select number of women, who had husbands actually living, laid the deities on the sacred beds, and kept midnight vigils with the usual solemnity. But neither these religious ceremonies, nor the liberal donations of the prince, could efface from the minds of men the prevailing opinion, that Rome was set on fire by his own orders. The infamy of that horrible transaction still adhered to him. In order, if possible, to remove the imputation, he determined to transfer the guilt to others. For this purpose he punished with exquisite torture a race of men, detested for their evil practices, and by the vulgar called christians. The name was derived from Christ,

who was crucified in the reign of Tiberius, under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea. By that event, the sect of which he was the founder, received a blow, which for a time checked the growth of a dangerous superstition. But it revived soon after, and spread with recruited vigour, not only in Judea, the soil that gave it birth, but even in the city of Rome, the common sink into which every thing infamous and atrocious flows, like a torrent, from all quarters of the world. Nero proceeded with his usual artifice. At first they only were arrested, who professed to be of that sect, and by their information a vast multitude were brought to light and condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enmity to mankind. They were put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and left to be devoured by dogs; others were nailed to the cross; numbers were burnt alive; and many covered with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night. For the convenience of seeing this tragic spectacle, the emperor lent his own gardens. He added the sports of the circus, and assisted in person, sometimes driving a curricle, and occasionally mixing with the rabble in his coachman's dress. At length the cruelty of these

proceedings filled every breast with compassion. Humanity relented in favour of the christians, though they were guilty, and deserving of the the most exemplary punishment: but they fell a sacrifice not for the public good, but to glut the rage and cruelty of one man only."

Here we see the christians expressly distinguished as a new sect, independent of the Jews; and Tacitus appears to have been the first pagan writer who made the distinction. Nevertheless, it may be inferred, that all those who believed in Jesus did not go by the name of *Christians*. This appellation was applied to them by way of reproach, and that by the rabble or vulgar. Many acquiesced in the name, and no doubt gloried in it; but the narrative implies, that there were others who from prudence did not assume that title, but sheltered themselves under the established institutions and denomination of Jews. Tacitus asserts, that Nero used great artifice in punishing the professors of the new religion; having first seized those who with the religion openly professed the name, and then by their information discovered those who, without the ignominious name, embraced the religion of Christ. Tacitus needed not to be informed, that christianity was a species of judaism. The wicked Jew and his Egyptian associates had long ago professed to teach it in Rome, as the wisdom of the

laws of Moses; and to the atrocities of which those men were guilty Tacitus alludes, when he says, that to that city flowed every thing infamous and atrocious, thus artfully involving the whole sect, in the enormities which a few unworthy men had committed.

Pilate pronounced our Lord innocent, and yet delivered him up to be punished. Tacitus has acted in the same manner in regard to his followers in Rome. He asserts their innocence of the crime imputed to them by Nero, and yet represents them as deserving all the cruelty which that monster inflicted on them. "They were hated," says he, "on account of their enormities." The assertion carries a tacit opposition to the complaint of the believers, that they were hated and persecuted not because any guilt could be found in them, but because of the name by which they were called*.

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* Justin. Apol. i. εφ ημων δε το ονομα ὡς ελεγχον λαμβανετε, καιπερ ὁσον γε εκ του ονοματος τους κατηγορουντας μαλλον κολαζειν οφειλετε. χρισιανοι γαρ ειναι κατηγορουμεθα· το δε χρηστον μισεσθαι ου δικαιον. And Athenagoras asks, τι ἡμιν το ονομα προς κακιαν τελει. Tertullian writes with his usual point, Oditur in hominibus innocuis etiam nomen innocuum. Tacitus felt the iniquity of hating and punishing men on account of their name. He therefore virtually denies it, and affirms that they were thus

As Tacitus justifies the cruelties of Nero, so the Author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire justifies the inhumanity of Tacitus. He is greatly galled by the concession made by the Roman historian, that so great a multitude of christians flourished at this early period in Rome; and assuming the appearance of candour, he artfully endeavours, in pleading for the innocence, to establish the *obscurity*, of the new sect. His words are too important to be omitted; and they shew, that Mr. Gibbon, with all his celebrity, has displayed more zeal than ability in his attempts to undermine christianity. "Tacitus," says he, "very frequently trusts to the curiosity

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treated on account of their crimes.—Per flagitia invisos, that is, per flagitia, et non per nomen, invisos. He adds, Vulgus christianos appellabat. This shews that the believers, though they might not be ashamed of the name, did not themselves assume it, but were called so by the *vulgar* among their enemies. We are here left to conclude, that even among their adversaries, the politer or more candid part avoided the use of it, as a term of calumny and reproach. What Arnobius says is really wonderful; Christianorum nomen ethnicis execrabile et invisum habebatur, ominisque pessimi, adeo ut ad ejus mentionem inhorrescerent, et rabidorum effervescerent ardoribus." The name of *Nazarenes*, as appears from Mungo Park, is still held by the Moors in similar dread and abhorrence. The benevolent Jesus foresaw and predicted this circumstance. "All these things they will do unto you for my name sake." John xv. 21.

or reflection of his readers to supply those intermediate circumstances and ideas, which in his extreme conciseness he has thought proper to suppress. We may therefore presume to imagine some probable cause, which could direct the cruelty of Nero against the christians of Rome, whose *obscurity*, as well as innocence, should have shielded them from his indignation, and even *from his notice*. The Jews, who were numerous in the capital, and oppressed in their own country, were a much fitter object for the suspicions of the emperor and the people; nor did it seem unlikely, that a vanquished nation, who already discovered their abhorrence to the Roman yoke, might have recourse to the most atrocious means of gratifying their implacable revenge. But the Jews possessed very powerful advocates in the palace, and even in the heart of the tyrant; his wife and mistress, the beautiful Poppœa, and a favourite player of the race of Abraham, who had already their intercession in behalf of the obnoxious people. In their room it was necessary to offer some other victims, and it might easily be suggested, that, although the genuine followers of Moses were innocent of the fire of Rome, there had arisen among them a new and pernicious sect of *Galileans*, which was capable of the most horrid crimes. Under the appellation of Galilæans two distinctions of men

were confounded, the most opposite to others in their manners and principles; the disciples who had embraced the faith of Jesus of Nazareth, and the zealots who had followed the standard of Judas the Gaulonite. The former were the friends, the latter were the enemies of human kind; and the only resemblance between them consisted in the same inflexible constancy, which, in the defence of their cause, rendered them insensible of death and of tortures. The followers of Judas, who impelled their countrymen into rebellion, were soon buried under the ruins of Jerusalem; whilst those of Jesus, known by the more celebrated name of christians, diffused themselves over the Roman empire. How natural was it for Tacitus, in the time of Hadrian, to appropriate to the christians the guilt and the sufferings, which he might with far greater truth and justice have attributed to a sect whose odious memory was almost extinguished!"

"Whatever opinion may be entertained of this conjecture, it is evident that the effect, as well as the cause, of Nero's persecution, were confined to the walls of Rome; that the religious tenets of the Galilæans or christians were never made a subject of punishment or even of enquiry; and that as the idea of their sufferings was for a long time connected with the idea of cruelty and injustice, the moderation of succeeding princes in-

clined them to spare a sect, oppressed by a tyrant, whose rage had been usually directed against virtue and innocence." Vol. II. c. 16.

The immortal writings of Philo and Josephus set aside these positions as altogether unfounded in truth; and the only apology that can shelter the author of The Decline and Fall from the charge of wilfully misrepresenting the truth, is, that he was entirely ignorant of what he had undertaken to relate. Appealing, as I do, to the plain sense of mankind, I fear not to advance, in opposition to Gibbon, that this very passage carries its own evidence, that the christians were of universal notoriety when thus made the subjects of persecution. For, if Nero put fire to the city, and imputed it to the christians, does not this suppose that the christians were *well known* and *hated* by the inhabitants? Does it not suppose, that the Roman public were eager to believe every imputation against them, however odious and improbable, and only wanted some plea to destroy them? Nero knew the disposition of the Romans in regard to the converts; he acted on that presumption, and was not disappointed. Nor is it true, that their sufferings were confined to the walls of Rome. Independently of the facts brought to light in this volume, we have sufficient evidence to prove the contrary. The persecution was not the *cause* but the *effect* of the public

hatred; and as the christians were every where equally hated, they must have been persecuted in the provinces as well as in Rome. When the dogs of persecution, in whatever place, saw the chain, which had hitherto bound them, struck off by the hand of the emperor, they necessarily sprung upon their unprotected victims; and in the western extremity of the Roman empire, a monument was raised in honour of Nero, for exterminating the christians from that province*. Equally unfortunate is our author in inferring the

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* "To Nero Claudius Cæsar Augustus, high priest, for clearing the province of robbers, and those who taught mankind a new superstition." Apud Gruter, p. 238. Lardner (Vol. VII. 248.), than whom none was more cautious, admits the genuineness of this inscription. The christians are here stigmatized as *robbers*, one of the reproaches imputed to them by Tacitus and by others in the age of Nero; and this is a circumstance which should raise the monument above the suspicion of forgery; as it proves that it came not from a *disguised friend*, but from a real enemy. Yet Gibbon says that it is a manifest and acknowledged forgery, contrived by that noted impostor, Cyriacus of Ancona, to flatter the pride and prejudices of the Spaniards. We shall be little disposed to credit this assertion, when we recollect that the same historian is equally confident in pronouncing, that the testimony of Josephus concerning Christ is a forgery of the third century, and that Basnage has demonstrated the writings of Philo respecting the Esseans to have been extant before the advent of Christ.

moderation of subsequent times from the excess of Nero's cruelty. For though the public might at length relent, and commiserate the christians under their refined and protracted tortures, no idea of injustice was associated with their sufferings in the bosom of their enemies. Tacitus says, that they were guilty, and deserving of all the atrocities which were wantonly heaped upon them*. He regrets not indeed their destruction; but that they were destroyed for the gratification solely of one man. If he had been a little older, he would himself have enjoyed the spectacle; and he intimates that all Rome would have enjoyed it with him, if exhibited for the public good.

What Mr. Gibbon so modestly calls a conjecture, shews, that no more credit is due to his judgment as a critic, than to his assertion as a historian. The tragedy exhibited by Nero was played a few years before at Antioch. A monster, not inferior to that emperor, accused his own father, and the other christian Jews, of an intent to burn the city; and we may be assured, that the cruel accusation at Antioch and at Rome originated in the same cause. The first converts in general regarded Rome as the grand seat of that power of

* Nero subdidit reos, quos per flagitia invisos——sontes, et novissima exempla meritos.

darkness, which opposed the kingdom of light; and believing, from the prophecy of Daniel sanctioned by Christ, that all such power would, in the end, be utterly destroyed, fondly concluded that the proud mistress of the world would undergo the fall which the holy city so signally experienced. Nero could not be ignorant that such a notion was cherished by perhaps a majority of the christians in Rome, and that by some of them a prophecy, inculcating the conflagration of the capital, was forged and circulated under the high authority of the Sibyl. The tyrant naturally availed himself of these circumstances, as affording a fair opportunity of indulging in security, the most unparalleled malice, cruelty, and revenge. The city he set on fire in various quarters, and pointed to the christians as the perpetrators of the horrid deed. The accusation, he knew, would appear plausible, as their sentiments respecting its approaching conflagration were notorious. And it is farther worthy of remark, that, as we are informed by Dion Cassius, Nero sung an oracle on this occasion, as though he held out to the enraged populace, that this was an act by which the christians endeavoured to fulfil their own prediction.

Gibbon, being desirous to shew that he at least admired, if he could not rival, the talents of Tacitus, has painted him in all the attractive colours of

virtue and genius. His historical compositions, indeed, will doubtless ever continue the admiration of mankind: but if we divest him of the splendor, which adorns his name as a writer, we shall see abundant reason to detest him as a man. In a moral view his character, instead of raising our notions of human nature, as his encomiast would have us believe, will be found to add deeper shades to our darkest ideas of human depravity. This man was one of the bitterest and ablest enemies of the gospel which antiquity produced. The vices which stand most opposite to the soft and endearing qualities of our nature are cruelty and falsehood; and these are rendered more inexcusable and odious, when accompanied with high intellectual endowments. Tacitus had early enlisted under the banners of superstition, and he employed his great and luminous faculties to suppress the rising empire of truth and virtue; and to check the dearest interests of mankind, their conversion from ignorance, guilt, and misery, to knowledge, virtue, and happiness. I shall bring into one view the facts which justify these reflections*.

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* Tacitus has treated of the Jews, in the fifth book of his history. It is particularly worthy of notice, that his description appears to allude to the Jewish believers as the persons who chiefly excited his animosities. "The first elements of

1. The pages of Jewish history were open before the public at the time when Tacitus wrote his work; yet in preference to Josephus, whom he knew to be most worthy of credit, he followed Apollonius, Manetho, Apion, Helicon, and others, who furnished materials for ridiculing and ca-

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their religion," says he, "teach their proselytes to despise the gods, to abjure their country, and forget their parents, their brothers, and their children."—Apud ipsos fides obstinata, adversus omnes alios hostile odium. He says the same thing of the christians by name. Odio humani generis convicti sunt. We have already noticed a passage in Philo intended to meet this accusation; and I here subjoin another which is directly on the subject. Τοις νομοις ασκησαντες, πολλη τινι περιουσια χρωμεθα φιλανθωπιας, του μεν λυπειν και αντιλυπειν αλληλους απεχομενοι, τα δ' οικεια αγαθα μη θησαυροφυλακουντες, αλλα εις μεσον προφεροντες καθαπερ συγγενεσι, και εκ φυσεως αδελφοις, τοις πανταχη πασιν. ετι τοινυν το μεν εθνος επι μισανθρωπια διαβαλλετωσαν, τους δε νομους ὡς αμικτα και ακοινωνητα παραγγελλοντες αιτιασθωσαν οἱ δεινοι συκοφανται. Vol. ii. 399. p. 711. *Disciplined by our laws, we give pre-eminent proofs of philanthropy, as we not only abstain from mutually grieving one another, but bring forth our treasures in common, instead of hoarding them up, and invite all men of every place and description to share of them, as if they were our kindred and even our brethren. This being the case, let cruel calumniators represent our nation as hating the human race; and accuse our institutions as selfish and unsocial.*

lumniating the Jews. Thus he gives it as the opinion of some, that the Jews came from Crete, and derived their name from mount Ida; that they were driven from Egypt as afflicted by the leprosy; that they worshipped the ass in the temple of Jerusalem, because that animal conducted them to springs of water in the wilderness, with many other calumnies equally false and malicious. 2. He represents the whole Jewish nation, and the Jewish believers among the number, indiscriminately as robbers and as enemies of the human race; and while, in general terms, he inculcates their guilt, he was unable to specify a single act of which they were guilty. 3. To make Basilides a more exact parallel with Josephus, Tacitus says that he was one of the Egyptian nobles, though he must have known, that he had been a slave, and then a freedman of Vespasian; and he gravely states that his name and appearance in the temple, while eighty miles distant from Alexandria, presignified the approaching elevation of that emperor. 4. On the authority of the priests, Tacitus relates the advent of Serapis in Egypt; and he inculcates his superiority to Jesus Christ; as the former did not, like the latter, come to destroy the community to which he was sent, but to make it a kingdom great among the nations: and that the departure of Serapis might not be less miraculous than that

of Jesus, he represents him as ascending to heaven in a column of fire. Lastly, Tacitus represents Serapis as performing, by the ministry of Vespasian, two miracles similar to those which our Lord wrought by the finger of God. These are the things which Tacitus has recorded, and that with all the solemnity of truth. He did not, he could not believe them to be true; yet he uses the full force of the Roman language, in order to impose them as such on the credulity of his readers*. Nothing can add to the infamy and guilt of this conduct, but the consideration that his object was to counteract the counsel of God, and the happiness of mankind.

Though Tacitus deals in dark accusations against the christians, he has left the founder of

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* Tacitus intimates, that both these miracles were related by men who had been present; that such persons, being still alive, continued to relate them in his time; and that their relation must be true, because they had no motive to tell a falsehood. Utrumque, qui interfuere nunc quoque memorant, postquam nullum mendacio pretium. He also endeavours to obviate the suspicion of contrivance by observing, that one of the patients was *known* to have been blind. Though the courtesy of modern critics has disposed them to speak of Tacitus with unqualified admiration, his character seems to have been more justly estimated by the christian fathers. Tertullian says, that he was a man beyond all others loquacious of falsehoods. Ille sane mendaciorum loquacissimus.

christianity unstained by any imputation, moral or political *. He does not say that Jesus Christ

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* The governors of the provinces were called upon by custom and by authority, annually to transmit to the emperor an authentic account of their public transactions. The miracles of Jesus, and the commotions among the Jews, consequent on his claims, must have induced Pilate to mention him to Tiberius, in his official documents, as a man whose death, though free from every crime, was demanded by the great men, and rendered politically expedient on the part of government. These documents, which were received by Tiberius, were deposited in the archives of the state. See Lardner, vol. vii. p. 231. where this question is discussed. To these Tacitus had full access; and he knew it would have appeared strange, if he should ascribe any guilt to one, however obnoxious, whom his very judge at the trial, and in his official papers, had pronounced, at least in a moral view, without fault. Tacitus has also read Josephus, whose testimony to the wisdom, to the virtues, and to the works of Jesus, must have tended in the court, and among the higher classes, greatly to establish the innocence of his character. He insinuates, indeed, that the religion was for a while suppressed, by the execution of its founder: and this insinuation Tacitus probably had from the Acts of Pilate; who, to justify his sentence, might have stated, that in consequence, the faction which gathered around Jesus, while alive, was dispersed by his death. The language of Josephus is calculated to correct this misrepresentation—"This was the Christ: and those who from the first became attached to him, *continued their attachment*, though he was condemned by our great men, and crucified by Pilate: for he appeared to them again alive the third day," &c.

was a deceiver or vain pretender; he does not deny the goodness, the wisdom, the miracles, ascribed to him by his followers; and though he mentions his ignominious death, he leaves him in full possession of his innocence and of his claims. This forbearance is a circumstance which may well surprize us, and in which we may justly triumph. The deadly tiger, roving in search of prey, would not, without some powerful reason, pass by the man who excited his rage, and who, when attacked, might appease his hunger. The cause of this silence is to be sought in the unrivalled purity of our Lord's character, in the reality of his miracles, and in the circumstance that the belief of them, in the days of Tacitus, was indelibly engraved on the public mind by multitudes in every country who related them, and died in attestation of their truth. While describing the christians in Rome, this writer had his eyes fixed on the name and character of Jesus: he saw him, on his first appearance, like the sun newly risen; he saw that neither the arm of power was able to arrest his progress, nor the breath of calumny finally to obscure his lustre. He saw him, though nearly overwhelmed for a season, emerging with additional splendor from the mist of opposition; the prejudices and vices of mankind giving way, and the moral world blessed by the light and influence of his gospel.

This is what Tacitus saw; and he felt the impotence of calumny and reproach. Like the monster of the forest abovementioned, whose season for prey is darkness, he eyed the spotless luminary, and retired in silence to his den. As if not content with this negative acknowledgment of the virtues and miracles of Christ, he illustrates their truth in a still more remarkable manner. He plunges into the depth of Egyptian superstition; and seeks to undermine what he could not directly attack. Serapis, he insinuates, has equal claims to our regard: for he appeared to the people of Alexandria, and performed similar wonders by his servant Vespasian. No writer that had common sense, that cherished the love of truth, or dreaded the imputation of falsehood, would have attempted such an artifice, if he could with any probability of success, have contradicted the claims of our Lord. The attempt, by such a man as Tacitus, is itself a monument of their validity and truth.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ZEALOTS AND THE GNOSTICS DESCRIBED —SHEWN TO BE THE SAME PEOPLE.

WE have already seen, that the Esseans and the disciples of John the Baptist were the same people; and that they classed with the first converts to the gospel among the Jews. This, however, is to be understood only of the majority of the Esseans. While a numerous and virtuous band of disciples, who embraced the religion of Jesus with sincerity, and adorned it by their conduct, were brought up in the school of the Baptist, there also arose its bitterest enemies, who rendered it of no effect by falsehoods of their own invention, and brought upon it the reproaches of the unbelieving world by their unworthy behaviour. After the promulgation of the gospel, the followers of John divided into two parties, one (which comprehended the far greater number) embracing Jesus as the Messiah; the other opposing his claims by those artful means, which appeared most alluring to the prepossessions of their adherents. The leaders of the refractory

party were men of talents, who having received their early education in foreign countries, blended the philosophy of the Gentiles with the superstition of the Jews. These men, by their ambition and learning, obtained an easy ascendancy among the Esseans. After the death of John and Jesus, some of them infested Judea at the head of those banditti, which Josephus calls *sicarii*, or robbers; others, pretending to have received authority from God, deceived the people by falsehoods or magical appearances; while many of them united with the Scribes and Pharisees in opposition to the gospel. Actuated as they were by deep-rooted enmity against Christ and his cause, a coalition of this kind, in such circumstances, was most natural. But so generally were the claims of Jesus received by the people, and so irresistible were the evidences of his doctrine, that they found it impracticable to check its progress by reason or open violence. They, therefore, professed not only to believe, but even to teach the gospel; and thus, under the mask of friendship, they attempted to supersede it by an artful system, which, however absurd it may appear to modern readers, was admirably adapted to the prepossessions of the Jews.

Before I proceed to unfold this system, which soon produced the most baleful effects, I will give, from authentic sources, the character of the

founders. In ancient ecclesiastical history they are known under the name of *gnostics*, and in the Jewish war under that of *zealots* or *robbers*. These were the men who destroyed the spiritual system of judaism, as taught by Christ in Judea; and who with their religion brought the Jews themselves into destruction. They are, therefore, the people against whom Josephus has levelled all the force of his genius, and on whom he has poured the bitterest indignation of his soul. But let us first see what the apostles Peter and Jude say of them.

"But as there were false prophets among the people, so there will be false teachers among you, who shall craftily introduce destructive heresies, denying even the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves speedy ruin. And many will adopt their pernicious opinions. By reason of these the way of truth will be evil spoken of. By covetousness they will be led to feign doctrines, and make gain of you. Their punishment is long since preparing, nor does the day of their condemnation slumber. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hades, and delivered them in chains to dark places for judgment, And spared not the ancient world (while he saved Noah one of eight as a teacher of righteousness) but destroyed it as ungodly by bringing in a flood. And he turned

into ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and dooming them to be overthrown, made them an example for those who should hereafter lead an ungodly life. But he saved Lot a just man, and greatly distressed by the impure conduct of the wicked. For while that righteous man dwelled among them, he saw and heard their unlawful deeds, and his righteous soul from day to day was sorely harassed. The Lord is able to rescue the godly from danger: while he reserves the unjust for punishment, after the day of judgment; especially those who pursue the unclean desires of the flesh, and despise government; who being presumptuous and obstinate, are not afraid to speak evil of dignities: whereas angels, who surpass them in might and authority, bring not against them a railing accusation before the Lord. But these men, like brute animals, made to be taken and destroyed, revile the things which they do not understand, and shall perish by their own depravity, when they shall receive the reward of their wickedness, inasmuch as they deem it pleasure to riot by day, and foully tarnish your profession by the wanton and deceitful tricks, which they practise in your love-feasts. Their eyes are completely adulterated, and refrain not from sinful lust. They allure into their snares the souls of the unstable. Having their hearts disciplined in deeds of covetousness, they

are heirs only of the curse. Having forsaken the true God, they wander in pagan error, and have acted, like Balaam the son of Bosor, in preferring the wages of unrighteousness. But a reproof corrected his transgression, a dumb ass speaking with a human voice having stopt the infatuation of the prophet. These are springs without water; clouds blown by a tempest; for whom black and perpetual darkness is reserved: for they speak vain, and high sounding words, and again entangle in lust and wantonness, such as have once actually escaped the impurities of those who live in pagan error. While they promise them liberty, they are themselves the slaves of corruption: for every man is a slave to that which controuls him. For if they are again entangled and brought into subjection by those polluted practices of the world, which they had escaped, by acknowledging our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; their last condition is worse than the first: since it were better for them not to have acknowledged the way of righteousness, than, after this acknowledgment, to turn aside from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it hath happened to them according to the true proverb, The dog went back to his own vomit, and the sow that is washed again wallows in mire." 2 Peter, chap. ii.

I next transcribe the description which the

apostle Jude has given of these men. "Beloved, while I was preparing with much earnestness to write unto you concerning the common salvation, I find it rather necessary to send to you a written exhortation, earnestly to contend for the faith as it was once solemnly delivered to the saints. For certain men have cunningly introduced themselves amongst us, who were long since ordained for this condemnation, as being men who are ungodly, who turn the free gospel of God into lasciviousness, and who deny the only supreme God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

"I wish to remind you (though ye already know it well) that the Lord, after having delivered the people from Egypt, yet destroyed, at a later period, those who became unbelievers. The angels also who have not preserved their original condition, but left their own habitation, he has reserved ever bound in dark places for the judgment of the great day. As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the surrounding cities, which like them gave themselves up to follow impurities, and even unnatural lusts, stand forth a conspicuous example, having received the judgment of even yet unextinguished fire; in like manner these filthy dreamers pollute themselves, despise authority, and revile men in power. But Michael the archangel, when disputing with the accuser about the body of Moses, dare not to bring

against him a railing accusation, but only said, 'The Lord rebuke thee.' But these men vilify those things of which they have no knowledge, and what knowledge they naturally have, that they employ, as if brute beasts, to corrupt themselves.

"Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain, and have greedily pursued the error of Balaam for a reward, and are doomed to destruction by a gainsaying like that of Coreh. These are foul stains on your love-feasts: and when they feed with you, they without dread glut themselves. They are clouds without water, trees fruitless, rotten, rooted up, and thus doubly dead; waves of the sea, raging and pouring out their shame as a foam; wandering stars, to whom is for ever reserved the blackest darkness. And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these; saying, behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, and to convict all that are ungodly; bringing to light the impious deeds which they have committed, and refuting the harsh speeches which profane sinners have spoken against him. These murmur and complain against God. They walk after their own lusts, with swelling speeches in their mouths; admiring the persons of men for the sake of gain. Beloved, remember the words formerly spoken

by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how they told you that, in the latter time, scoffers would arise, and follow their own impious lusts. These are they who separate themselves, being carnal and not spiritually minded. But do ye, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; praying with a holy mind; and keep yourselves in the love of God, in expectation of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Distinguish between them (and those whom they delude). These save by rebuking some, by having compassion on others, and others by terror, thus snatching them out of the fire, but shun even the garment that is defiled by lust."

We have hitherto known little of the men whom the apostles have described in the above severe language. Both these extracts seem at first sight strongly coloured with the language of human passion, and therefore unworthy the pen of inspiration. And this doubtless is the reason, why the authenticity of the epistles whence they are taken, have been called in question. But Josephus has described the same men, and by his description all obscurity and doubt happily vanish together. "They call themselves," says he, "*zealots*, as if they were zealous of good works; whereas they are zealous only in wicked actions, and surpass beyond example all others

in baseness*." He speaks of their wickedness as incredible in many parts of the Jewish War. The following extracts present the same frightful character with that drawn by the apostles.

"The sicarii, who seized Masada, were commanded by Eleazar, a descendant of Judas, who persuaded many of the Jews not to register themselves, when Cyrenius was sent to assess Judea. The sicarii combined against those, who were disposed to continue in subjection to the Romans, and treated them in every respect as enemies, plundering their goods, and burning their houses. For they pretended that those men differed not from strangers, who basely betrayed that liberty, which is so dear to the Jews, and preferred slavery under the Romans. But this was a mere pretext, to conceal their cruelty and avarice, as they clearly shewed by their subsequent conduct. At that time every kind of vice

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* Τουτο γαρ αυτους εκαλεσαν, ὡς επι αγαθοις επιτηδευμασιν, αλλ' ουχι ζηλωσαντες κακιςα των εργων και ὑπερβαλομενοι. B. J. lib. 4. c. 3. 9. To this name Paul seems to allude in Titus ii. 14; where he characterizes the true believers in opposition to the impostors, as λαον ζηλωτην καλων εργων; and in Acts xxi. 20. the believers are called ζηλωται του νομου. And Philo describes the man who is truly in the image of God, as ζηλωτης της δικαιοσυνης. Vol. ii. p. 6. One of the zealots was an apostle. Luke vi. 16.

prevailed among the Jews, so that no work of iniquity was left undone, nor can the imagination of man well conceive the crimes that were actually committed. All were become so depraved, in public and in private, that they rivalled one another in their impiety towards God, and injustice to their neighbours. The men in power oppressed the people; while the populace were eager to destroy the men in power. For the former were bent upon tyranny; the latter on violence and rapine. The sicarii took the lead in deeds of iniquity, and first displayed their cruelty towards their own kindred; leaving no word unsaid which might insult, or no deed undone which might destroy, the object of their perfidy. Yet compared with John, even these appear just and humane. For he slew not only individuals, and especially those who gave him wise and salutary advice, and whom, for this reason, he regarded as his worst enemies; but he also filled the whole community with innumerable evils: and so outrageous was he become, that he boldly blasphemed God. Nor can we wonder that he, who had abandoned himself to all the madness of impiety, should no longer cherish the feelings of humanity. On the other hand, what evil did the son of Giora not inflict? What injuries did he not perpetrate with those daring ruffians, who appointed him their chief?

The ties of consanguinity and friendship only made them more eager for the effusion of blood. Thinking it a timid and inglorious weakness to immolate only strangers and enemies, they coveted the glory of indulging in ferocious cruelty towards their nearest relations and friends. The madness even of these was equalled by the Idumæans, who, by murdering the high-priests, cut off the last remnant of our religious and political establishments, and introduced complete anarchy and impiety. In regard to iniquity, that race of men who called themselves zealots surpassed all others; and in every respect they realized the reverse of that name. For they zealously committed every species of wickedness; nor has history recorded a crime which has not been perpetrated by them. Nevertheless, they assumed the name, as though they were zealous only of good works; thus intending either to deride those, who were the objects of their unjust and brutal treatment; or to pervert the nature of things, by ascribing to the greatest evils the sanction of good. For this reason they all came to a suitable end; God having visited them with a punishment meet for their crimes. For they were overtaken by all the calamities which human nature can endure; through these they waded to the farthest verge of life, and under

the weight of these they at length sunk in death." J. W. lib. 7. c. 8. 1.

The people here described were deeply concerned in the war which the Jews had with the Romans, and Josephus necessarily notices them in many parts of his history. I shall give from him one or two more extracts, where he is more particular respecting John of Gischala and the zealots.

"The wicked and daring intrigues of John corrupted the Galileans, who had advanced him into power; and he, in return, protected them all in the indulgence of whatever each of them desired. Their wish to search and to plunder the houses of the rich was insatiable; and murdering the men, and violating the women, were to them mere sport. They devoured the plunder which they made mixed with the blood of the plundered; and they abandoned themselves to every species of intemperance, without dread or compunction. They wore false hair; clothed themselves in female garments; sweltered in perfumes and ointments; and, to increase still farther the beauty of their person, adorned their eye-lashes with paint. They imitated not only the ornaments, but acted the part of women; rolled in the streets as in a brothel, polluted every part of the city by their unhallowed deeds,

and from excessive wantonness indulged in unnatural crimes. While they assumed the appearance of women, they spread slaughter with their right hands; and when affecting an effeminate deportment, they darted like fierce warriors on whomsoever they met, and run him through with swords drawn from under their richly dyed robes*."

"The zealots at last became so barbarous, as not to allow the rites of burial either to those

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* Κἀν τουτοις επινοια κακων και τολμη το συνταγμα των Γαλιλαιων διηφθειρε. τον τε γαρ παρηγον εις ισχυν ὁυτοι, κἀκεινος, εξ ἡς περιεποιησατο δυναστειας, ημειβετο, παντα επιτρεπων ὁρᾳν ὡν ἑκαστος επεθυμει. ποθοι δε ἀρπαγης απληρωτοι, και των πλουσιων ερευνα, φοβος τε ανδρων τε και γυναικων ὑβρεις επαιζοντο. μεθ' ἁιματος δε τα συληθεντα κατεπινον, και μετ' ἀδειας εθηλυπαθουν τῳ κορῳ, κομας συνθετιζομενοι, και γυναικειας εσθητας αναλαμβανοντες, καταντλουμενοι δε μυροις, και προς ευπρεπειαν ὑπογραφοντες οφθαλμους. ου μονον δε κοσμον, αλλα παθη γυναικων εμιμουντο, και δι' ὑπερβολην ασελγειας αθεμιτους ἡδονας επενοησαν. ενειλινδουντο ὡσπερ πορνειῳ τῃ πολει, και πασαν ακαθαρτοις εμιαναν εργοις. γυναικιζομενοι δε τας οψεις, εφονων ταις δεξιαις, θρυπτομενοι δε τοις βαδισμασιν επιοντες εξαπινης εγιγνοντο πολεμιοι, τα τε ξιφη προφεροντες απο των βεβαμμενων χλαμιδων τον προστυχοντα διηλαυνον. B. J. lib. 4. c. 9. 10.

slain in the city, or to those who fell along the roads; but as if they had solemnly pledged to dissolve with the laws of their country the laws of nature, and to be unjust towards men in order to dishonour God, they left the dead to rot in the light of day: and if any attempted to bury his relatives, he inevitably perished in the attempt. Thus he who granted the favour of a grave to another, presently needed a grave for himself. In a word, no honourable feeling was so entirely lost in those men, as that mercy which is so requisite in a season of calamity. For the objects which excite the compassion of other men, served only to render the zealots more ferocious: and thus they transferred their rage from the living to the slain, and from the slain to the living. In this manner they trampled upon all the rights of men, derided the divine laws, and scoffed at the oracles of the prophets. For the prophets have given many precepts in favour of virtue and against vice, which the zealots violated, and thereby brought upon themselves the accomplishment of a prediction delivered against our country. For there existed a certain ancient oracle, which foretold that the city would then be taken, and the holy place burnt by the laws of war, when commotions should prevail, and the inhabitants themselves with their own hands pollute the sanctuary of God. This the zealots

did not disbelieve; yet they employed themselves as the ministers of its accomplishment*."

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* Οι δε εις τοσουτον ωμοτητος εξωκειλαν, ως μηδε τοις ενδον αναιρουμενοις, μηδε τοις ανα τας οδους μετδουναι γης· αλλα καθαπερ συνθηκας πεποιημενοι τοις της πατριδος συνγαταλυσαι και τους της φυσεως νομους, αμα τε τοις εις ανθρωπους αδικημασι συμμιαναι και το θειον υφ ηλιῳ τους νεκρους μυδωντας απελειπον. τοις δε θαπτουσι τινα των προσηκοντων, ὁ και τοις αυτομολουσιν επιτιμιον, θανατος ην. και δεισθαι παραχρημα ταφης εδει τον ετερῳ χαριζομενον, καθολου τε ειπειν, ουδεν ουτως απωλλει χρησον παθος εν ταις τοτε συμφοραις ως ελεος. ἁ γαρ εχρην οικτειρειν, ταυτα παρωξυνε τους αλιτηριους, και απο μεν των ζωντων επι τους ανηρημενους, απο δε των νεκρων επι τους ζωντας τας ὀργας μετεφερον. και δι' υπερβολην δεους ὁ περιων τους προληφθεντας ως αναπαυσαμενους εμακαριζεν, οι τε εν τοις δεσμωτηριοις αικιζομενοι, κατα συγκρισιν, και τους αταφους απεφαινον ευδαιμονας. κατεπατειτο μεν ουν πας αυτοις θεσμος ανθρωπων, εγελατο δε τα θεια, και τους των προφητων θεσμους ὡσπερ αγυρτικας λογοποιιας εχλευαζον. πολλα δε ουτοι περι αρετης και κακιας προεθεσπισαν, ἁ παραβαντες οι ζηλωται, και την κατα της πατριδος προφητειαν τελους ηξιωσαν. ην γαρ δη τις παλαιος λογος ανδρων ενθα τοτε· την πολιν ἁλωσεσθαι, και καταφλεγησεσθαι τα ἁγια νομῳ πολεμου, σασις εαν κατασκηψη, και χειρες οικειαι προμιαινωσι το του θεου τεμενος· οις ουκ απισησαντες οι ζηλωται διακονους εαυτους επεδοσαν. B. J. lib. 4. c. 6. 3.

Now, if we compare the language of the two apostles with these extracts from the Jewish historian; if we consider, that they describe a body of Jews, and Jews who flourished in Judea, a little before the destruction of that nation, we shall not hesitate to conclude, that they mean the same people. Of this conclusion we shall have no doubt, if we examine their character in a religious, moral, and political view.

The apostles represent them as denying or rejecting the only true God, that is, as apostatizing from the religion of Moses and the prophets. Josephus, in effect, asserts the same thing: for he describes them as guilty of daring impiety against God*, as trampling on his laws, and deriding his prophets. Again, St. Peter's language holds them forth as persons who once believed in Christ, and even conformed to his gospel. "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it hath happened to them, according to the true proverb, The dog returns to his own vomit, and the sow that is washed, again wallows in mire." Now, this very language was

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* Josephus says of John, ὁποια πραξειν εμελλεν ανθρωπος ηδη και τον θεον ασεβειν τετολμηκως.

most applicable to the zealots, and to the followers of John of Gischala. For Josephus tells us, that they were *Galileans*, (the name by which the Jewish believers were commonly called,) whom that wicked chief had corrupted, and whom he sanctioned in the commission of all their crimes. Besides, he says, that they did not disbelieve the oracle which foretold the destruction of the city, yet employed themselves as the ministers of its accomplishment. They then did not disbelieve the prophecy delivered by Jesus, and recorded by the evangelists. But they could not believe this, without being at least nominal believers in the gospel. And undoubtedly it is to their madness and inconsistence, as professing christianity, that Josephus alludes.

If we consider the gnostics and the zealots in a moral view, they are identified by the same frightful features of turpitude and villainy. Amidst the general resemblance which presents itself in the description given by Josephus and the sacred writers, some circumstances are so minute, peculiar, and characteristic as to shew, that they must have had in view the same class of people. Thus, they painted their eyes, or had eyes of adultery*; they admired the persons of

* The words of Peter are οφθαλμους εχοντες μεστους μοιχαλιδος, and may mean, that they had *adulterated eyes*,

men, and went in the way of *Cain*, by which is meant, that they persecuted and murdered their brethren; and their guilt in this respect Josephus states in the most emphatic manner. "The ties of consanguinity and friendship only made them more eager for the effusion of blood. Thinking it a timid and inglorious weakness to immolate only strangers and enemies, they coveted the glory of indulging a ferocious cruelty towards their nearest relations and friends*." Our Lord predicted that, before the destruction of the Jewish state, *iniquity*† would abound. This term does not, as the English reader might suppose, mean mere wickedness or unrighteousness, but

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or *lustful eyes.* The apostle intended chiefly the last sense; but he probably glances at the practice which Josephus records, of adulterating their eyes with paint.

* Ποια δε αυτους φιλια, ποια δε συγγενεια προς τους εφ ἑκαστης ἡμερας φονους ουχι θρασυτερους εποιησε; το μεν γαρ τους αλλοτριους κακως ποιειν αγεννους εργον ειναι πονηριας ὑπελαμβανον, λαμπραν δε φερειν επιδειξιν ἡγουντο την εν τοις οικειοτατοις ωμοτητα.' B. J. lib. 7. c. 8. 1.

† Δια το πληθυνθηναι την ανομιαν, ψυγησεται ἡ αγαπη των πολλων. Matt. xxiv. 12. The words of Josephus are, Και την τελεωτατην εισηγαγον δια παντων ανομιαν, εν ᾗ το ζηλωτων κληθεντων γενος ηκμαζεν.

that unawed and unrestrained licentiousness, which is founded in the rejection of all moral obligations, and of all laws human and divine. This prediction has been remarkably verified in the conduct of the sicarii and zealots. Josephus, using the very word, says, that they surpassed all other men in iniquity; and alluding to the sanctions of virtue and of a future state, which the prophets enforced, and which the gnostics denied, he further affirms, "that they derided the divine laws, and scoffed at the oracles of the prophets. For the prophets have given many precepts in favour of virtue and against vice, which the zealots violated, and thereby brought upon themselves the accomplishment of a prediction delivered against our country." These wicked men went even farther. In derision of truth and virtue, they sought to give their immoralities the form of a regular system, and the sanction of a law. Instead, therefore, of concealing their enormities, they proclaimed them; and, as St. Paul says, gloried in their shame. "I shall not omit," says Theodoret, "the force of law which they give to their system *. They admit the

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* Την δε ασελγειαν συγκαλυπτειν ουκ ανεχομενοι, αλλα νομον την ακολασιαν ποιουμενοι. Hær. Fab. lib. 1. 5. To the same effect writes Josephus, τα μεγιστα των

transmigrations of the soul, but not on the principle taught by Pythagoras. For he said, that souls which have sinned are sent into bodies to be duly punished and purified. But the gnostics say, that the cause of their being embodied is directly opposite to that assigned by Pythagoras. For human souls, affirm they, are sent into bodies in order to practice all manner of lewdness; that, therefore, those souls which fulfil this end, on being once immersed in a body, do not need a second immersion: whereas those which have sinned in a small degree must be sent twice, thrice, and even oftentimes, until they have completed all sorts of baseness." The general spirit of this account is confirmed by the Jewish historian; "They assumed the name of zealots, as intending either to deride those who were the objects of their unjust and cruel treatment, or to pervert the nature of things, by ascribing to the greatest evils the sanction of good."

In the last place, if we consider the political conduct of the zealots, we shall conclude, that they are the same people with the gnostics; and in this view, the writings of Josephus throw

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κακων αγαθα νομιζοντες, where the last word means *sanctioning* or *enforcing by law*, agreeably to the primary sense of νομιζω, as taken from νομος.

much light on the dark and uncertain language of the apostles. The Jewish historian asserts, that they were the chief instigators of the revolt from the Romans; and gives many instances which shew, that as against them the force of the Roman arms was principally directed, they in their turn opposed the government with the utmost violence, misrepresenting and execrating its ministers and friends. To their conduct in this respect Peter alludes, when he speaks of them as men who despised government, and being presumptuous and obstinate, were not afraid to speak evil of dignities. They advised the people, and in many instances forced them, to take up arms and follow them, under the promise of conferring on them liberty and independence*. The apostle has not overlooked their language and conduct in this respect. "They speak vain and high-sounding words, and again entangle in lust and wantonness such as had once escaped

* Simon, son of Giora, collected a great multitude of wicked men, by thus promising them liberty—προκηρυξας δουλοις μεν ελευθεριαν, γερας δε ελευθεροις, τους παντα-χοθεν πονηρους συνηθροιζεν. Lib. 4. c. 9. 3. The impostors made their followers a similar promise. See J. A. lib. 20. c. 8. 10.

the impurities of those who live in pagan error. While they promise them liberty, they are themselves the slaves of corruption." Josephus expressly and repeatedly declares, that the zealots occasioned the destruction of the Jewish community; and that to punish them the Almighty brought the Romans to consume the Jews with their city and temple, as if with purifying fire. This circumstance happily accounts for the dark denunciations held forth against these men by Peter and Jude. "For if God spared not the angels, but cast them down to Hades, and delivered them in chains to dark places for judgment; And spared not the ancient world, while he saved Noah, one of eight, as being a teacher of righteousness, but destroyed it as ungodly by bringing in a flood; And he turned into ashes the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and dooming them to be overthrown, made them an example for those who should hereafter lead an ungodly life." Josephus illustrates the meaning of this language; and verifies the truth of the warnings contained in it by saying, that those wicked men came to a suitable end, God having visited them with a punishment meet for their crimes; that they were overtaken with all the calamities which human nature can endure; that through these they waded to the farthest verge of life, and at

length under the weight of them sunk in death*."

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* Τοιγαρουν προσηκον ἑκαστοι το τελος ευροντο, του θεου την αξιαν επι πασιν αυτοις τιμωριαν βραβευσαντος. ὁσας γαρ ανθρωπου δυναται φυσις κολασεις ὑπομεναι, πασαι κατεσκηψαν εις αυτους, μεχρι και της εσχατης του βιου τελευτης, ἡν ὑπεμειναν εν πολυτροποις αικιαις αποθανοντες. B. J. lib. 7. c. 1.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GNOSTIC SYSTEM DELINEATED.

IRENÆUS, Theodoret, and Epiphanius*, have minutely detailed the religious opinions of the gnostics, and their statement is confirmed by the notice which the apostles have indirectly

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* Their vices and tenets are also occasionally noticed by Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, and Eusebius. The more eminent ecclesiastical writers who, among the moderns, have given an account of the gnostics, are Beausobre, Le Clerc, Tillemont, Mosheim (Eccles. Histor. vol. i. part 2. chap. 5.), and Lardner, in the ninth volume of his works. This last writer, by his candour and the predominant goodness of his heart, has been betrayed into great weakness. For in his History of the Heretics, he is ever the advocate of those impostors. Not only the Greek and Latin fathers, but Jesus and his apostles have condemned them, as monsters of iniquity and falsehood; but Lardner and Beausobre were disposed to defend them as an injured people. My readers will perceive that, if the present chapter contain a correct statement, the character and system of the gnostics have been as much mistaken by modern critics as the writings of Philo and Josephus.

taken of them. The substance of these destructive heresies is given by St. Jude in the following words. "They turn the free gift of God into licentiousness; they deny the only supreme God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Here are three things implied, in regard to the men of whom the apostle speaks—They denied the only supreme God—They denied our Lord Jesus Christ—They perverted the gospel which is the free gift of God, and which is the means of reforming the world, into an instrument of impurities. I shall confine myself at present to these three leading points in the gnostic system.

The gnostics were epicurean Jews, and the doctrine by which they artfully attempted to set aside the gospel, is really founded in *atheism**,

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* The ancient fathers well knew, that the gnostics were *atheists;* and that they assumed the name only to undermine the doctrine of Christ. Thus says Justin Martyr, Εισιν ουν, και εγενοντο πολλοι, οι αθεα και βλασφημα λεγειν και πραττειν εδιδαξαν, εν ονοματι του Ιησου προελθοντες——ων ουδενι κοινωνουμεν, οι γνωριζοντες αθεους και ασεβεις και αδικους και ανομους αυτους υπαρχοντας, και αντι του τον Ιησουν σεβειν ονοματι μονον λεγειν. Dialog. p. 208. ed. Thirlby. If any doubt could remain on this subject, the testimony of Josephus to the views and vices of those men must remove it. Nothing is more mistaken than the notion generally entertained, that the gnostics

the authors from interested motives having endeavoured to conceal their real sentiments.

Epicurus excluded the gods from all concern, not only in the formation, but in the government of the universe; and he represents them as indolent, impassive, and solitary beings, equally untouched with the joys and sorrows of men. Had the popular superstition rendered it safe or expedient, he doubtless would have gone a step farther, and at once denied the existence of such beings. But he well knew that, if he established this point so far as to exclude, in the general estimation, the influence of superior intelligence, the transition to an open and direct denial would be short and easy. The impostors,

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borrowed their ideas of God from the oriental philosophy. On the contrary, they learnt them in the school of Epicurus. They called their supreme deity Βυθος, the very name applied to the *Abyss* in the Mosaic history, while the description they give of him is copied from the Epicurean philosophers. See Lucretius, lib. i. 57. - He was not the creator, nor had he any concern in the government of the world; and his happiness consisted in silent ease, indolent tranquillity and indulgencies unruffled by disquietude, and uninterrupted by care. Hunc Proarchen et Propatera et Bythum vocant; esse autem et invisibilem, et quem nulla res capere posset. Cum autem a nullo caperetur, et esset invisibilis, sempiternus et ingenitus *in silentio et in quiete multa fuisse in immensibus œonibus.* Iren. p. 7.

having imbibed this notion, adopted his conduct in their mode of supporting it. They did not indeed think it prudent openly to maintain, that the world had no intelligent cause, distinct from the matter that composed it; but they insisted, that the author of it was a weak and wicked being; while he who was supreme in power and goodness lived in indolent tranquillity, unconcerned about human affairs.

The Jewish lawgiver, with the succeeding prophets, taught the existence, and inculcated the worship, of an all-wise and perfect Jehovah; boundless in goodness, as well as in power and wisdom; the sole creator and governor of the universe; the righteous Lord, loving righteousness, hating iniquity, and rewarding those who sought and obeyed him. Had the deceivers acknowledged the existence and sovereignty of such a Being, the necessity of conforming to his laws, and the guilt and danger of disobedience, would follow as necessary consequences. They therefore endeavoured to guard against these consequences, not indeed by denying that he existed, but by stripping him of his natural and moral perfections. The motives which induced them to reject a God of infinite purity, inclined them on the other hand to become the votaries of an impure and unholy being, namely

the *Serpent**, which the Egyptians worshipped as the symbol of wisdom, and which from the beginning they opposed to the God of the Jews. Thus the gnostics, as Jude says of them, denied the only supreme God.

They denied our Lord Jesus Christ.—So extraordinary and various were the works of Jesus, so fairly and openly were they performed, so numerous and unexceptionable were the witnesses who attested their reality, that not one even of his bitterest adversaries, for the space of two hundred years, ever ventured to call them in question. The belief of their truth, which the impostors could not resist, they endeavoured artfully to undermine. And the wretched expedi-

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* Ειδεναι δ' αυτον εχρην ὁτι ὁι τα οφεως ἑλομενοι, ὡς καλως τοις πρωτοις ανθρωποις συμβουλευσαντος, και τιτανας και γιγαντας ὑπερβαλοντες, και οφιανοι δια τουτο καλουμενοι. Orig. contra Cels. p. 294. *Celsus ought to know, that there exist those who pretend to be christians, yet have espoused the cause of the serpent, as having given good advice to our first parents. For this reason they are called SERPENTISTS; and they exceed in fiction and impiety the Titans and the Giants.* This last remark is very appropriate. By comparing them with the Titans, who waged war on Jupiter, Origen shews that he well understood their views to be similar in regard to Jehovah, being desirous to defeat his wisdom and benevolence as displayed in the gospel.

ent, to which they had recourse, to answer this purpose, is a demonstration of the impossibility of denying his works with effect in those early times. Jesus, they asserted, had a body unlike the bodies of other men; it being composed of a subtle æthereal substance, which made him an object only of sight. Or, in other words, he was, according to them, a man only in appearance—a ghost or a phantom. This position being admitted, the conclusion, they well knew, would obviously follow, that his miracles were also phantoms, or things done in appearance only. But this fiction was taught in somewhat a later period, and in countries remote from Judea, where the distance of time and place rendered it more difficult of contradiction. Had the impostors maintained such an opinion of Christ among the people, who had known the person and seen the works of Jesus, it would have appeared to the most ignorant too ridiculous to be believed. They therefore inculcated a different notion, which in Judea appeared far more specious, namely, that Jesus was really a man, but a man *distinct* from the Christ; this being a God which had descended upon him at his baptism, and which left him, when apprehended for crucifixion. Accordingly, the deceivers affected to acknowledge and honour the divinity which dwelt in the man Jesus, while they anathema-

tized, cursed, or excommunicated Jesus himself*. "They vilify Jesus," says Origen, "no less than Celsus; nor do they admit any into their society, unless he first fix curses upon Jesus." To this extraordinary fact there are the most marked allusions in the writings of the apostles. Thus Paul writes, 1 Cor. xii. 3. "Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no one, speaking by the spirit of God, calleth Jesus *cursed*, that is, rejecteth Jesus with execration. The impostors pretended to be divinely inspired, and on the authority of this inspiration, excommunicated with curses the man, whom Paul preached as the Son of God, and yet affected to believe in the Christ that dwelled within him. At the close of the same epistle the writer adds, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be *(anathema)* excommunication, that is, "Instead of excommunicating the Lord Jesus, excommunicate that person, whoever he be, that, pretending to receive the Christ, yet blasphemes and hates the Lord Jesus." Thus the gnostics denied our Lord Jesus Christ.—They denied him, because pretending that he was a God, he did not come

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* Ωςε ουκ ελαττον κατηγορειν αυτους του Ιησου, και μη προτερον προσιεσθαι τινα επι το συνεδριον ἑαυτων, εαν μη αρας ϑηται κατα του Ιησου. P. 294.

in the flesh, or did come without a human body; or that having come in the body of Jesus, he was as the Christ distinct from the man Jesus.

The gospel not only allowed the distinction which naturally subsists between vice and virtue, but was preached to the world as a power divinely efficacious in enforcing virtue, benevolence, and piety, and in thus rescuing the world from vice and misery. In answering this end, it inculcates two points of supreme importance, namely, that there is to be a future state; and in order to ensure happiness in that state, we must become good, holy, and pious in this. These two grand points the Founder of christianity has established in the following manner. "Mankind shall live again, because they shall rise again; and as a pledge that all men shall rise after death, he himself will rise after having publicly died." He *was* put to death in the manner foretold by him, and he did actually rise, according to his promise; and having fulfilled this part of his promise, it follows of course, that in due time the other, namely, the resurrection of the dead, shall also be fulfilled. Now this argument supposes, that the person, authorized by God to make this declaration to the world, was really a *man*; that he possessed the nature of a man, and not of a superior being. If he were a God, his resurrection, as a pattern of the resurrection of mankind,

would be rendered void, as he must then necessarily have risen by virtue of his divinity: nor could the resurrection of a being superior to death, be a conclusive proof of the resurrection of beings by nature subject to death.

Of this the impostors were aware, and they insisted on the divinity of Christ, not only to account for his miracles, but also to supersede the great doctrine of a future existence, founded on the resurrection of Christ. They reasoned thus: "There will be no judgment to come, because there will be no life to come; and there will be no life to come, because the dead shall not rise; and the dead shall not rise, because Christ being a God was crucified in appearance, and rose in appearance, and rose only by virtue of his divine nature." These sentiments, however, they did not always profess, but somewhat disguised them, in order to avoid a direct and obvious hostility to the christian revelation. The prospect of a future state, and the sublimity of a future judgment, constitute, they knew, the glory of the gospel, and render it, conformably to the original name of gospel, *good news* to men. An avowed disbelief of these fundamental tenets would have appeared to the most superficial observer to be utterly inconsistent with a profession in its divine origin. The impostors, therefore, being enemies in their hearts to these animating

principles of conduct, but unable to refute them, as established on the simple yet solid basis of our Lord's resurrection, sought to render them inefficient by a monstrous fiction, calculated to make the gospel appear not only false, but absurd and ridiculous. They speak of the Saviour's second coming; and in derision of that fact, they represent themselves as destined, in consequence of certain natural qualifications, unconnected with virtue or a holy life, to be married to the angels that shall accompany him. See Irenæus, P. 31, 32.

Thus they endeavoured to defeat christianity, as a principle of reformation and virtue. But they went farther, and made it an incentive to the grossest impurities*. Epicurus made the sensual appetite the only standard of right and wrong, and taught that no pleasure could exist distinct from the pleasures of sense. This was a

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* Τουτο πειθουσι τους ανοητους αυταις λεξεσι λεγοντες ὁυτως, ὁς αν εν κοσμῳ γενομενος γυναικα ουκ εφιλησεν, ὡστε αυτην κρατηναι, ουκ εστι εξ αληθειας, και ου χωρησει εις αληθειαν. Iren. p. 31. *They thus persuade their senseless followers, saying in these very words; whosoever being in the world is not in love with a woman, so that she prevails over him, is not of the truth, and will not go into the truth.* This language was used, it is plain, at once to deride and pervert what our Lord said to his disciples, in John xvii.

doctrine too flattering to be resisted by men, who were exceedingly depraved by animal gratifications, and who sought no higher and more refined object than their own immediate interests. The founders of gnosticism, therefore, conformably to their master, denied all moral obligations, as founded in the nature of things; and impudently taught, that the distinction of virtue and vice in conduct, proceeded from the malevolence of the Creator, or from the arbitrary institutions of men*. Accordingly, Josephus, with justice and truth, thus speaks of them: "They trampled upon all the rights of men, derided the divine laws, and scoffed at the oracles of the prophets. For the prophets have given many precepts in favour of virtue and against vice, which the zealots violated, and thereby brought upon them-

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* Non enim esse naturaliter justus, sed accidenti; quemadmodum posuerunt qui mundum fecerunt angeli, per hujusmodi præcepta in servitutem deducendos homines. Quapropter et solvi mundum, et liberari eos, qui sunt ejus, ab imperio eorum, qui mundum fecerunt, repromisit. Irenæus, p. 95. Simon held forth to his followers, that he would deliver them from the restraints of virtue, imposed upon them by the Creator and his prophets; and soothed them with the assurance, that salvation was not to be obtained by *virtuous actions*, but by *grace*—ου δια αγαθων πραξεων, αλλα δια χαριτος τευξεσθαι της σωτηριας. Theodoret, Hær. Fab. lib. i. 1.

selves the accomplishment of a prediction delivered against our country." Having thus virtually superseded the necessity of maintaining a holy life, they consistently enough transferred the standard of a true and sound faith, from the outward conduct to some inward emotions, from the fruits of virtue to some internal seed implanted in the heart. And it was an obvious inference, which they drew as a cloak to their depravities, that good actions being unnecessary to their happiness in this, would not be requisite to their salvation in the next world.

Among the Jews, they insisted on the works of the law—that is, the ceremonies of the law—as the means of acceptance with God; and strenuously endeavoured to exclude from the privileges of the gospel such of the gentile converts, as did not submit to the rite of circumcision. The indispensible necessity of this rite they maintained, in order at once to set aside the duties of repentance and reformation; and to check the progress of the gospel, by placing on the shoulders of those among the pagans, who were disposed to receive it, a heavy yoke, to which they could not submit. On the contrary, the apostles, with St. Paul at their head, represented the gospel as a free gift, unencumbered by the ceremonies of the Levitical code; and that nothing farther on the part of the heathens was

necessary to salvation, but a practical obedience to its moral precepts. Of this representation the impostors availed themselves; and, taking the works of the law to mean *virtuous actions*, they taught their followers the very gratifying doctrine, that salvation was obtained by *grace*, not by *good works*, and that therefore they were free to commit whatever enormities their wishes might suggest.

Such were the leading opinions which formed the gnostic system; and so true is the representation of the apostle, that they made the gospel a pretext to encourage impurities, denied God, the only supreme ruler, and our Lord Jesus Christ. The author of the epistle to the Trallians asserts with the utmost truth of these base authors, that they spoke of Christ not that they might preach Christ, but that they might supersede him; and that they professed the law, in order to establish a system of iniquity. I shall subjoin to this account four observations, which appear to me facts of great importance, and which subsequent inquiry will more abundantly verify.

First. The gnostics were not mistaken friends, but malignant, yet concealed, enemies of the gospel. This follows from the unparalleled wickedness of those men, as described by the apostles, by Josephus, and by the fathers; and from the nature of the system itself, which is a

fiction too wild and monstrous to have been seriously believed by any. The description given of them in the New Testament supposes their cunning and malice against the gospel, though professing to believe it. The beloved disciple gives them and their doctrine the emphatic name of *Antichrist.* 1 John iv. 23. Peter, Paul, and Jude, describe them as *scoffers* of that religion which they professed to teach; as *mockers* and *revilers* of God; as men who *cunningly* introduced themselves into the christian church. In this they precisely agree with Josephus, who represents them as men who trampled on the divine laws, and scoffed at the oracles of the prophets. The apostle Paul in several places has drawn their character and views in the foulest colours of duplicity and baseness. He speaks of them as men not *weak* but *wicked;* not mistaken in *judgment,* but depraved in *heart;* as men who abandoned the faith, because they first made shipwreck of conscience. 1 Tim. i. 19. What can more clearly prove, than the following description, that the apostle understood the scheme of the false teachers in the very light in which it is placed in these pages? "For such are false apostles, men of deceitful actions; transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder: for Satan himself putteth on the appearance

of minister of righteousness; whose end will be according to their works." 2 Cor. xi. 13.

Secondly. The gnostic system was formed soon after the promulgation of the gospel, and preached in every place where the gospel had been previously proclaimed. The authors, and their agents, appear to have followed the apostles in every quarter; and to have introduced it into all the churches which they had founded, the church of Jerusalem, as it seems from the epistle to the Hebrews, not to be excepted. The prevalence of these destructive heresies was the means in the hands of Providence to call forth the apostolical epistles; and the obscure and disputed parts of those epistles can be understood and decided, only by comparing them with the errors, which they were intended to correct. This will open a new field of biblical inquiry; and afford the happy prospect of bringing to an end those unfortunate disputes, which have for ages divided the members, and kindled the animosities of the christian church.

Thirdly. A considerable proportion of the scribes and pharisees at an early period embraced the gnostic system, as the most likely means to defeat the gospel. Their number continually increased, till the commencement of the Jewish war, when the main body of the nation

divided into two parties—those who received the spiritual judaism unfolded by Jesus, and those who, determined to oppose it, apostatised from Moses and the prophets. This, I presume, will appear a fact, from those parts of the christian scriptures which are levelled against the impostors; and from the writings of Josephus, which represent the zealots as prevailing over the wise and prudent part of the nation, in occasioning the war, and thus ruining their country.

Lastly. The deceivers were very successful, by means of their system, in counteracting the gospel, and seducing multitudes from the original purity of its faith and practice. They studiously accommodated their tenets to the prepossessions of those whom they sought to delude; and their fair profession and studied duplicity could not fail of alluring the unstable, and betraying the unwary into their snares. One of their principal artifices was, to mix as friends in the *love-feasts* of the christians, and then, after entangling the less prudent of the members in some irregularities, expose them and their profession to public reproach. Their pretensions to superior knowledge, and the study of magic, in which they were skilful, gave them an easy ascendancy over the unlettered, and enabled them the more effectually to pervert the truth. Hence Irenæus, in his preface, says of them with justice, "Some

sent against the truth introduce lying and vain genealogies, which, as the apostle says, afford disputations rather than edification in the faith; and by a specious appearance of probability, which they craftily study, they pervert the understanding of the unlettered, and make captives of them, by cunningly using the oracles of the Lord, and basely expounding the fair things said by him. They subvert many, and lead them astray from him, who framed and adjusted the universe, under the pretence of knowing something superior and more exalted than the Creator."

Our Lord had a full and distinct foreknowledge of the impostors, and in the most solemn manner cautioned his virtuous followers against the melancholy consequences of their hypocrisy and falsehoods. "Beware of those false teachers, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." Matt. vii. 15. And again, xxiv. 24: "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and they shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." These warnings were in a few years justified by the event. A great part of the apostolical epistles bespeak the baleful effects of the gnostic heresy; and from the words of Paul to the Galatian church, we may fairly judge of those effects in all

the churches. "I marvel greatly, that from him who hath called you in the grace of Christ, ye have so soon transferred yourselves into another gospel; which is not a gospel, but the crafty doctrine of certain men, who have entered to disturb you, being desirous to subvert the gospel of Christ." Gal. i. 6. See also chap. iii. 1. Even the church at Jerusalem, though under the immediate inspection of the apostles, and guarded by their united authority, was in danger of being overthrown by the impostors: and the probability of a general apostacy among the Hebrew believers may be gathered from the following exhortation addressed to them: "Wherefore, let us leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to its consummation; not a second time incurring the necessity of repentance from dead works, of a belief in God, in the doctrine of purification, in the laying of hands, in the resurrection of the dead, and in an eternal judgment. For it is impossible that they who have been once baptized, and have enjoyed the heavenly gift, and partaken of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good doctrine of God, and the miracles of the age to come, should, if they fall away, be renewed unto repentance, having again crucified in themselves the Son of God, and exposed him to reproach. For the land, which drinketh the rain that is often falling on

it from God, and beareth herbage useful to the tillers, receiveth praise; but when it bringeth forth thorns and briers, is disapproved and condemned, and at last burnt up." Heb. vi. 1.

The deceivers endeavoured to bring back the converts from the perfect doctrine of Christ to the elements of judaism, or to those ritual observances, which were intended by their primary use to wean the Jews from idolatry into the belief of one God. The writer enumerates the several points in the gospel, which the antiapostolical teachers sought to subvert: and these are repentance from dead works, belief in God, in the doctrine of purification, in the laying of hands i. e. in the communication of the Holy Spirit (which the impostors denied) by the laying of hands, in the resurrection of the dead, and a judgment to come. The last verse is remarkably beautiful, because it contains an illustration very familiar to the Jewish believers as tillers of the land, to which, as Philo asserts, they were principally devoted; and because it contains an awful intimation, that, if they followed the deceivers, who resembled thorn and briers or barren trees, they would meet the fate which soon awaited them, of being cut down and burnt as fuel. This is the image by which John the Baptist, and our Lord himself, predicted their destruction.

In spite of these and similar exhortations, the

gnostic heresy gradually made its way, and many worthy men became infested with some of its tenets, though they rejected its grosser parts. In proportion as the believers were become corrupt in principle, they degenerate in manners. In the course of half a century the Hebrew converts, as a body, lost much of that splendour of virtue, which distinguished them but a few years after the resurrection of Jesus. Philo and Josephus describe their character in a very different manner, though somewhat of that difference may be ascribed to the dissimilar genius of the two writers, the former being an ardent and energetic apologist, the latter a cool dispassionate historian, who nevertheless represents them as surpassing all other men in piety and benevolence. By the lapse of three centuries, the Esseans were so sunk in error and superstition, that they could hardly be deemed a christian sect. And even Porphyry, the bitterest enemy of the gospel, speaks of them with approbation.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, IN ORDER TO SET ASIDE THE CLAIMS OF JESUS, UNITED WITH THE GNOSTICS IN DENYING THE GOD OF ISRAEL.

WE have already seen that the Jews, contemporary with our Saviour, acted contrary to the decided conviction of their understanding, in setting aside his claims. I shall now shew that, being determined on rejecting our Lord, they in consequence apostatized from the fundamental principle of the law, and united with the gnostics in denying the Creator of the world, the God of their fathers. To this alternative they were reduced, by the irresistible evidence which supported the divine mission and authority of Jesus. For at his baptism he was announced in the midst of multitudes, by a voice from heaven, as the beloved Son of God. He did the will, and displayed the power of God in the works which he performed, and which his enemies could not deny. In repeated, explicit, unequi-

vocal language, he referred all his works to the Great Being who sent him. He went even farther, and to preclude any possible pretence for saying that he acted without the authority of God, or that he came to execute a scheme independent of his will and design, he maintained, that he was one with the Father, that the Father dwelt in him, and that whosoever saw him, saw the Father also. It follows therefore that, as those who received Christ, received him from the testimony of God, so those who rejected him, could not reject him but by rejecting the perfections of God. Accordingly, it will appear, that our Lord, in discoursing with his enemies, always supposes them to be apostates from the law, and to be impious blasphemers of the universal Father.

In the Recognitions ascribed to Clement, a work written about the close of the first century, and containing facts very worthy the attention of learned men, it is intimated, that many of the scribes and pharisees united with the disciples of John, the more effectually to oppose the claims of Jesus*. This coalition, which appears to me

* Scribæ quoque et pharisæi in aliud schisma diducuntur: sed hi baptizati a Johanne, et velut clavem regni cœlorum, verbum veritatis tenentes, ex Moysis traditione susceptum, occultaverunt ab auribus populi. Sed et ex discipulis

very natural in those circumstances, is implied in several parts of the evangelical records. I shall examine a few of these passages. In John iii. 22. we thus read: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. (And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem.) And they came and were baptized. And a dispute arose on the part of John's disciples with the pharisees about purification*." The followers of John maintained, that he was the Messiah, in opposition to the Lord Jesus; and they were filled with jealousy, when they saw the latter performing such miracles, and the people flocking to him, to the neglect of his forerunner. Under the influence of this jealousy, the leading disciples of the Baptist, accompanied with certain pharisees, went and disputed with Jesus or his followers about baptism; insisting, no doubt, that the baptism of John, and not that of Jesus, was the baptism of the Messiah. Their preju-

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Johannis, qui videbantur esse magni, segregarunt se a populo, et magistrum suum veluti Christum prædicarunt. Hæc autem omnia præparata sunt schismata, ut et fides Christi per hæc impediretur. Recogn. lib. i. 54.

* That is, the disciples of John, accompanied with the pharisees, disputed with the disciples of Jesus respecting baptism.

dice against Christ appears to have been deeply rooted, and the Baptist endeavours to eradicate it in the succeeding verses, having unequivocally borne his testimony to him as superior to himself.

Another allusion to this coalition we meet with in Matt. ix. 10.—"And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold many publicans and sinners came, and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Then came to him the *disciples of John*, saying, Why do *we* and the *pharisees* often fast, but thy disciples fast not?" On the brief and emphatic reply, which Jesus here makes to his enemies, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, the words of Josephus is a beautiful comment, "In a word, no honourable feeling was so entirely lost in those men as that *mercy*, which is so requisite in seasons of calamity. For the objects which excite the compassion of other men, served only to render the zealots more ferocious." Jesus knew what was in those men who

here opposed him, and foreseeing the barbarities they should commit, applies to them a maxim, which, though most necessary in their situation, was most foreign to their nature. Such instances lead us to conclude, that the language of our Lord had, on every occasion, more than ordinary force and propriety.

Let us next see what the Baptist thought of the sadducees and pharisees, who affected to believe in him. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the pharisees and sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O race of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance." John baptized the people who came to him with upright views; but he appears to have dismissed the sadducees and pharisees without that ceremony, having manifested some surprise and indignation at their appearance. He was therefore aware, that they had some sinister end, which they wished to conceal under a shew of repentance. The Baptist here calls them *a race of vipers*, in reference, no doubt, to the title in which they prided as the *race of Abraham*. He intimates farther that, unless they repented, they were to be removed from the stem of Abraham, while the Gentiles,

by repentance and reformation, were to be engrafted in their room. But the Gentiles became the children of Abraham, by believing, as Abraham did, in one God, the only creator and governor of the universe. By parity of reason, the incorrigible among the Jews ceased to be the children, by apostatizing from the faith of that patriarch, that is, by relapsing into idolatry, denying, as Jude says of them, the only supreme Lord, and affecting to believe in the *serpent*, which the Egyptians worshipped as the symbol of wisdom, and had ever opposed to the God of Israel. The phrase *race of vipers* is fitly ascribed to the zealots, as worshippers of the serpents, while it characterises the malice and craft by which they were distinguished.

Our Lord, in the fifth chapter of John, discourses with the pharisees and sadducees of Jerusalem. Of this discourse I shall quote one passage to shew, that their sentiments were in perfect unison with those, whom the Baptist holds up as apostates from the faith of Abraham. "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. But I receive not testimony from man only: but these things I say, that ye may be saved. He was a burning and a shining light; and ye are willing for a season to rejoice in his light." Here it is explicitly declared, that at this period the pharisees and sadducees, whom Jesus

now addressed, affected to believe in John the Baptist; and this will account for their union with his disciples in opposing the claims of our Lord. He then adds, "But I know you that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another come in his own name, him ye will receive.—Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom you trust."

Here it is insinuated in very clear terms, that some impostor would come in his own name, and that the pharisees and sadducees would follow him, so as to forsake the true God, the universal Father; and that for their apostacy, in this respect, they stood condemned by the authority of Moses. Our Lord apparently alludes to Deut. xiii. 1. where we thus read, "If there arise among you a prophet, and giveth thee a sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee; saying, let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet." Here Moses in the name of Jehovah warns the Jews against an impostor, who should attempt to seduce them to the worship of some other *unknown* god. Now at this time the Samaritan Simon, a disciple of John the Baptist, did actually arise, and preached an unknown

God, superior to the Creator, and came *in his own name,* professing to be himself the great power of God. The Creator of the world, according to the antichristian system, was an object only of fear and hatred, he being an inferior and evil being. To this Jesus alludes, when he thus addresses the apostates that were about to embrace this system, "But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not, if another come in his own name, him ye will receive."

That the Jews, in rejecting the claims of Jesus, were compelled to deny the God of Abraham, is evident, moreover, from what our Saviour says to them in chapter eight. "Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father.—— Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." He means that they were children of the serpent, who in the beginning instigated Cain to murder his brother.

In his sermon on the Mount, the Saviour stands forth as the reformer of the Mosaic code; and sets aside the false morality of the scribes and pharisees. "For I say unto you, that except

your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." Before he concludes his discourse, he says, "Beware of false teachers, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matt. vii. 15. It is very clear that, by the false teachers here mentioned, Jesus meant the scribes and pharisees, against whom a great part of his sermon is directed. In one of his precepts a striking allusion is made to the unworthy notions, which those impostors were soon to adopt in regard to the great Creator. "But I say unto you, love your enemies: bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Meaning, "That ye may shew you inherit his clemency and goodness, in the same manner as children are supposed to inherit the good dispositions of their parents, or, that ye may imitate his example just as the example of parents is imitated by their offspring."

Now, when Christ exhorts his followers to love their enemies, to do good to those who hated, who cursed and persecuted them, in what sense could they be children or imitators of God? He foresaw, that the false teachers against whom he

forewarns his followers, were soon to apostatize from the God of Israel, and to embrace a system, in which the universal Father was blasphemed and reviled as an evil being. His argument is to this effect. "Some men, in order to reject my claims as a messenger from God, reject my Father which is in heaven, and thus hate and blaspheme him as an inferior, evil being; yet even from these he withholds not the exercise of his benevolence. Do you, in this respect, imitate his conduct, and resemble his character. Cease not, in imitation of him, to regard with compassion, and to treat with kindness, those who despitefully use and reproach you."

The following is the confession of Nicodemus, "And he said to Jesus, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God." Here it is manifest, that the Jewish teacher not only speaks his own conviction, but also the conviction of those people (namely, the pharisees) of whom he was one. The connection, which the pharisees, to whom Nicodemus alludes, had with the disciples of John, led our Saviour to notice the baptism of John on this occasion. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." As though he had said—"He cannot enter into my church on earth, and partake of its privileges, nor associate with the

just made perfect in heaven, and be crowned with their glory, unless the baptism of John with water, or my baptism with the Spirit, produce in you a radical change."

According to the zealots, the Creator was not a benevolent Being, and Christ came not to save, but to destroy, or subjugate, the world. Against these impious sentiments, the language of Jesus is forcibly levelled. "For God so *loved* the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but that he might have everlasting life; for God sent his Son into the world, not that he might condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth in him, is not condemned: but he who believeth not, is already condemned; because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God." These words immediately refer to the pharisees, and to the disciples of John, who, like Nicodemus, allowed the divine works and the divine authority of Christ, and yet rejected him as the *Son of God*, that is, as an authorized teacher from God to reform and to save the world. In this respect, they were guilty of the grossest inconsistency, and already stood condemned by their own confession.

The gnostic heresiarchs were all devoted to the practice of magic, which could succeed only

in dark places; and to their pretended miracles our Lord next pointedly refers. "Every one that practiseth base things, hateth the light, nor cometh to the light, lest his works should be detected. But he that doeth the reality, cometh to the light, that his works might be made manifest, because they are done in God." Which may be thus paraphrased: "Those who practise the base arts of magic, as well as evil-doers in general, ever have recourse to the covert of darkness, since they know that their deceptions would be discovered, if exposed to the light of day; whereas he who performs real miracles, does them in an open manner, and, so far from avoiding, seeks inspection and publicity, conscious that they were done by the finger of the Almighty, and not through the supposed assistance of demons." In Matt. vii. Jesus more directly notices the pretended miracles and evil deeds of the impostors, while they professed to believe in him —"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are rapacious wolves.——Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophecied in thy name, and in thy name cast out demons, and in thy name done many mighty works: and then I will confess to them, I never knew you. Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity."

"Whilst an innumerable multitude was ga-

thered together, so that they trod upon each other, Jesus began to say to his disciples: Above all things beware of the leaven of the pharisees, which is *hypocrisy*. For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known." Luke xii. 2. Which words may be paraphrased to this effect. "The pharisees, finding themselves unable by open violence to destroy you and your cause, will have recourse to *hypocrisy*, affecting to become your friends and supporters, in order the more effectually to answer their base end. Be therefore on your guard against their treacherous profession. Under the mask of hypocrisy, they will hope to gain your confidence, and then betray you; or to seduce you into error, and then defame you, or finally to make your simplicity the instrument of their avarice. Be not, however, dismayed by their machinations: for their deepest and best concerted plans to injure you will be exposed, defeated, and punished."

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he shall send forth judgment unto victory. And in his

name shall the Gentiles trust. Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But the pharisees having heard it said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of demons." Matt. xii.

These and the succeeding verses present an unequivocal instance of the apostacy of the pharisees from the God of Israel, in order to evade the conclusion drawn by the people, that Jesus was the Christ, or the son of David. The pharisees well *knew*, that Jesus performed this and his other miracles by the power of God: and if they were base enough to say, that what they knew to have been done by the Creator was done by the prince of the demons, the step was short to say, that the Creator was himself an evil being of that order. Our Lord perceived this; and accordingly he presently says, "Wherefore I say unto you, every kind of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men." The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is the blaspheming of God, who is a Holy Spirit: and the words contain a denunciation against the pharisees, for having recourse to so base an

artifice, in order to evade his claims. They are to this effect. "The pharisaical teachers, in ascribing, through malice and depravity, to an evil spirit, the works which I do by the spirit of God, setting aside by that means my claims to the Messiahship, incur a guilt, the consequences of which they shall suffer for ages, and the suffering of ages cannot expiate their guilt."

The people concluded, that Jesus was the Christ, or the son of David: but the pharisees set aside this conclusion by saying, that he derived his power from an evil being. Hitherto their opposition to the gospel was direct and open. But by coalescing with the gnostics, they assumed the appearance of friendship, and accounted for the miracles of Christ, by ascribing them to his own underived power as a God. They therefore affected to honour the divine character of Christ, while they rejected and blasphemed the man Jesus. In reference to this, the Saviour adds, "He who speaketh against the Son of Man shall be forgiven, but he who speaketh against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven, neither in this age, nor in the age to come." Mark (ix. 38.) has recorded an instance, in which an impostor appears to have used the name of Jesus in casting out demons, and yet blasphemed him. Here we see the foundation of the gnostic system already laid, while our

Lord was yet on earth; as the deceiver alluded to, evidently supposed a difference between Jesus and the Christ within him. The answer of our Saviour to the cavil of the pharisees implies, that some of their children, devoted to magic, would soon affect to believe in his name; "And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out. Therefore they *shall* be your judges." Jesus appears to allude by this argument to the following fact, recorded in Acts xix. 13.—"Then some of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over those who had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by that Jesus whom Paul preacheth. Now, the seven sons of Sceva, a chief priest of the Jews, were among those that did this."

The confession of Nicodemus intimates, that the pharisees were in their heart convinced of the divine mission of Jesus, though they ascribed his power to Beelzebub. When they ranked among the supporters of gnosticism, they affected to believe in the divinity of Christ, while they rejected him as an authorized teacher from the Creator. They therefore stood condemned by their own concessions; and to their inconsistencies our Lord thus refers, "By thine own words thou shalt be punished; by thine own words thou shalt be condemned." It is remarkable, that

Josephus represents the zealots as trampling upon those oracles, which they knew to be true. Jesus, in the next place, calls his adversaries an evil and *adulterous* generation, meaning a nation given to *idolatry;* a charge which, if well founded, supposes them to be apostates from the God of Israel.

The language of Peter implies, that some of the impostors once really believed in Christ, and that for a time they displayed the happy effects of his gospel in their conduct. "If they are again entangled, and brought into subjection by those polluted practices of the world, which they had escaped, by acknowledging our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, their last condition is worse than the first." Their apostacy in this respect our Lord clearly foresaw, and he has thus predicted it. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of the man, it passeth through desert places in search of rest; and finding none, it said, I will turn back to my house whence I came: and when it is come, it findeth the house ready for its reception, swept and put in order. Then it goeth, and taketh with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in, and dwell there: so the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. Thus will it be also with this wicked race."

From these remarks we may conclude, that

the pharisees and their disciples, who on this occasion endeavoured to set aside the claims of Jesus, were in the number of the gnostics or zealots described by Josephus. Hence we may see the force and pertinence of the prophecy, which the evangelist has cited above from Isaiah; as it holds forth the very striking contrast which subsisted between our Lord, and those wretches who abused his name and his religion. "He shall not strive nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench," &c. On the other hand, the zealots filled all Jerusalem with tumult and violence. "The houses," says the Jewish historian, "were desolated by their rapacious hands; wives and children were seen in black mourning for their slaughtered relations; while groans and lamentations resounded through the whole city: nor was there an individual who did not suffer from the assaults of those impious men." The *judgment* to be brought on those enemies of the truth by the destruction of the Jewish state; the final triumph and establishment of the gospel by means of that judgment; and its reception by the Gentiles, when thus rejected by the Jews, are points to which the words of the prophet emphatically refer. "A bruised reed shall he

not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he shall send forth judgment unto victory; and in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

The speech of Stephen, recorded Acts vii. furnishes the last instance which I shall notice of the apostacy of the Jews from the God of Israel. A modern reader will not immediately perceive the drift of this long discourse, as its application is of a symbolical nature. That holy man has selected the leading events in the history of Abraham, of Joseph, and of Moses; and shewn, that they bore such resemblance to those which distinguished our Lord and his followers, that the former were intended by the wisdom of providence, to have a typical reference to the latter. Thus—Did God command Abraham to leave his own country and kindred? This presignified the fate of Jesus, who left Nazareth, and who, though a prophet, was not honoured in his own family, and in his own country. Acts vii. 2—5. Was the Jewish patriarch foretold, that his posterity would sojourn in a strange land under bondage and ill-treatment? The prediction, in its ultimate reference, was accomplished in the ill-usage and hardships which the followers of Christ, the true posterity of Abraham, received from their countrymen, 6—8. Was Joseph

sold by his brethren, carried into slavery, falsely imprisoned by Pharaoh, and afterwards raised to the government of Egypt? These were events symbolical of the conspiracies, which the Jewish people formed against the prophet, which God should raise among them like unto Moses, and of his subsequent exaltation to the right hand of God.

Stephen then adds, "Him (namely Moses) our fathers refused to obey, and rejected, and turned in their hearts back to Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as to this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. So they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the image, and feasted themselves before the work of their own hands. Upon this, God gave them up again to pay religious service to the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets, Have ye offered to me, O house of Israel, slain beasts and sacrifices, these forty years in the wilderness? But ye took up the tent of Moloch, and the star of your god Rephan; images which ye made to worship them. So I will carry you away beyond Babylon."

Here it is very clearly implied, that the people, whom Stephen addressed, had at this time,

from whatever cause, apostatized from the true God, and become worshippers of other gods: and that the design of the passage might not pass unobserved, our apologist applies it in the following manner. "Ye stiff-necked men, of uncircumcised heart and ears, ye are always opposing the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of those prophets which foretold the coming of that righteous man, whom ye have betrayed and murdered, did not your fathers pursue and slay? Ye who received the law by the ministration of angels, but kept it not." 51—54.

Thus it appears from the New Testament, and from Josephus, that the pharisees and sadducees, who rejected the claims of Jesus Christ, rejected also the Creator of the world, and relapsed into atheism or idolatry. Their conduct in this respect was indeed impious in itself, repugnant to their prejudices as Jews, and to the first principles of the law of Moses; nor would they have adopted it, if they had not been forced upon it by the irresistible evidence of the gospel. Being unable to deny the miracles of Jesus, they denied the Great Being, from whom he derived, and to whom he constantly and unequivocally referred his power; and rather than embrace a religion,

which enjoined the mortification of every impure and selfish passion, they adopted a system, which not only tolerated, but encouraged, all the impure and selfish passions.

CHAPTER XX.

FALSE PROPHETS — THE ROBBERIES AND MURDERS COMMITTED BY THE GNOSTICS.

THE false prophets against whom our Lord had warned the people, are noticed in many passages by Josephus. In his *Antiquities*, (lib. 20, c. 8. 10.) the historian thus writes, "When Festus came into Judea, that country was infested by robbers, who burnt and plundered all the villages. At this time these robbers became very numerous, and were called *sicarii*, from the use of a small sword, not different in size from the Persian *acinaces*, but crooked like the Roman *sica*. With these weapons, they slew a great many at the festivals: from mingling with the crowd who, from all parts, resorted to Jerusalem, for the purpose of worshipping God, they easily dispatched such as they wished to become their victims. They also frequently attacked with arms the villages of their enemies, which having plundered, they consumed by fire. An impostor

in the number of the sicarii, seduced the people by a promise of delivering them from slavery and misery, if they would follow him to the wilderness. Against this seducer Festus dispatched a body of cavalry and infantry, who destroyed him and all his followers."

"The atrocities of the robbers filled the city with every species of impiety. Of these certain impostors persuaded the multitude, by falsehoods and deception, to follow them into the wilderness, where they should see unequivocal signs and wonders done according to the forewarning of God. Many yielded to their advice, and suffered the punishment of their folly: for Felix drove them back, and put them to death. At this time also a man came from Egypt to Jerusalem, who professed to be a prophet, and who exhorted the common people to accompany him to the Mount of *Olives*, situated opposite the city, at the distance of five furlongs: for he wished, as he pretended to shew from thence, that the walls of Jerusalem would fall at his command, and thus promised to open them an entrance into the city. But Felix being informed of these things, ordered his soldiers under arms, and advancing against them with a strong detachment of infantry and cavalry, attacked the Egyptian, and the people who were with him, of whom he took two and slew four hundred, but the Egyptian himself

escaped. The robbers moreover instigated the Jews to revolt from the Romans, saying, that they ought to be no longer in obedience to them, and those who refused to comply had their habitations plundered and consumed."

The miracles of our Lord being real, and of an important nature, necessarily produced a lasting impression on those to whom they were addressed: and gave birth to events, which never would have occurred, had they not been previously known and believed. The prophecy respecting the fall of Jerusalem, in a few years was universally made known, not only in Judea, but in other countries; and from the acknowledged authority with which our Saviour spoke and acted, it could not but be believed by all, however unfriendly to his cause, before it was yet justified by the event. The above impostor, availing himself of the well-grounded belief of the people, respecting that catastrophe, attempted to turn it to his own sinister purposes; and, in order to give his promise, that they should see the walls of Jerusalem fall at his command, the greater credit, he goes to the very spot, namely the Mount of Olives, where Jesus had delivered the original prediction. Had such a prediction not been known, and received among the people, so far would any be from following him, that there was not a Jew in the country, who would not have

regarded such impious pretensions in a foreigner with indignation and abhorrence.

The rise of this and other impostors was foreseen by our Lord, who with the utmost solemnity and precision cautioned the people against them, "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you, For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.—Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall give great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Mat. xxiv. 4, 23, 24.

Josephus speaks of six thousand who perished in the outer courts of the temple, after it had been set on fire. "The soldiers," says he, "set fire to the portico, whereupon some threw themselves headlong down the precipice; others perished in the flames; and not one out of so great a multitude escaped. A false prophet was the occasion of the ruin of these people, who on that very day had made proclamation in the city, assuring them that God commanded them to go up to the temple, where they would receive signs of deliverance. And there were then many prophets suborned by the zealots to impose on the people, who told them that they ought to expect deliverance from God.—Impostors, who spake

lies in the name of God, deceived this miserable people. They neither attended to, nor believed the manifest signs presignifying the coming desolation; but like infatuated men, who have neither eyes to see, nor minds to perceive, they neglected the divine denunciations."

Now, as the impostors who thus rose, classed with the followers of John, or however falsely with the followers of Jesus: and as, moreover, the signs which they promised, suppose the expectations of the people, derived from the miracles and predictions of Christ, it follows that the impostors themselves believed the truth of those predictions, though they were become too wicked and depraved to profit by them. And this conclusion we have seen is unequivocally asserted by Josephus.

Our blessed Lord warned the Jews that, in consequence of their vices, Jerusalem would be taken, and the temple itself destroyed. The recording of this awful prediction, though a melancholy, was yet a necessary task imposed on the historians of his life, as the fulfilment of it would prove, beyond all reasonable contradiction, the truth of his divine commission. Nor could the evangelists deem it an undertaking less dangerous than painful; since it might suggest to those, who were to be the instrument in the hands of providence of its accomplishment, the

idea of undertaking it, and embolden them with the hope of success. At all events their perverse countrymen, they were well aware, would take occasion from this to vilify them, as enemies to their own country; as a set of men who, in an artful manner, had invited a foreign foe to invade their native land, and to destroy even the temple of Jehovah. The dilemma to which the sacred writers were reduced, by apprehensions of this kind, were perplexing and perilous beyond description; and wonderful is the address with which they extricated themselves—an address which proves at once the soundness of their understanding, and the truth of their history. Matthew, as he composed his gospel in Judea, intimates that the army which should besiege Jerusalem was to be the Roman army, (chap. xxiv. 28.); but Mark, who published his narrative in Rome, has suppressed this intimation, though in other respects his account is equally particular and accurate with that of Matthew.

Of the manner in which the prophecy respecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, delivered by Christ and recorded by his historians, was urged as an accusation against them, we meet with a striking instance in Acts vi. 11.—"Then they suborned men which said, We have heard him (Stephen) speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God. And they

stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law. For we have heard him say, That this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the custom which Moses has delivered to us."

Now Josephus, in order to screen our Lord and his apostles from the odium of having handed to posterity a prophecy, which threatened the ruin and disgrace of their country, refers it to the *prophets*, and more particularly to *Daniel*, the most eminent and highly reputed servant of God in more ancient days. The Saviour himself did the same thing, being sensible that the oracle he gave his followers to record, would be one great means of bringing upon them the hatred and reproaches of their countrymen: and he moreover reminded them, on this occasion, that they should be hated by all on his account. Though Josephus refers the oracle to the ancient prophets in general, or to Daniel in particular, it is demonstrable that he meant that oracle, as enforced and rendered more definite by the predictions of Jesus.—For he represents it as not disbelieved by those wicked men who pretended to believe in Christ. He also knew that our

Lord had identified his prediction with the oracle of Daniel: he could not therefore refer it to the latter, without also intending the former. But what is most observable, the Jewish historian mentions the oracle under the peculiar limitations presignified by Jesus. "The city was to be taken and the temple burnt at the very time when commotions should prevail, and when impious hands should pollute the sanctuary of God." The ancient prophets have *not*, and our Saviour *has* thus limited the accomplishment of the oracle: for he not only says that Jerusalem would be taken in war, but that this event would take place in a season distinguished by uncommon disturbances, "When ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not afraid; for these things must come to pass.—Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilence, and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven."

Our Lord, moreover, had foretold that the oracle would be fulfilled, when the temple was beginning to be profaned. "And then shall the end come, when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." Mat. xxiv. 14. Modern critics suppose that by the abomination of desolation is meant the Roman eagle: But this, I

presume, is a mistake. The words of Daniel seem to refer to the robbers, who took their stand in the temple and desolated it, and by their impious deeds rendered it abominable in the sight of God. In this sense they were understood also by our Lord and by Josephus. The words of the prophet, to which Jesus refers, are the following: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince to come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for their wide-spread abominations, he shall make it (the sanctuary) desolate." Dan. ix. 26.

Here it is explicitly declared, that the people who should destroy the sanctuary were the prince's own people, and that they destroyed it by their wide-spread abominations. This declaration was literally accomplished. The zealots, or robbers, classed with the followers of Christ; and God brought fire on the temple, because it was polluted by their impious hands.

Farther, our Lord did not mean the Roman eagle by the abomination of desolation; because the Roman eagle was not brought into the temple, until it was set on fire and nearly consumed. J. W. lib. 6, c. 4, § 5, and c. 6, § 1. Titus did

every thing in his power to prevent the temple from being destroyed and even profaned. "I call to witness," says he, "the gods of the country, and every god who ever had a regard to this place; I also call to witness my own army, and the Jews, who are with me, and your ownselves, that I do not compel you to pollute your sanctuary: and if you will change the place of combat, *no Roman shall come near it;* for I will endeavour to preserve your temple, whether you will or not." J. W. lib. 4, c. 2, 4. Moreover our Lord's admonition to his followers, to preserve themselves by flight, supposes that he did not mean the Roman eagle, for it would be then too late to flee. On the other hand, the proper season for escaping the horrors of the siege was, when the zealots under John and Simon began to pour into the city, and profane the temple. Finally, the account which Josephus gives of the zealots proves, that by them is meant the abomination of desolation. For the high priest, Ananus, thus speaks of them in his speech to the Idumeans, "If you should examine them one by one, they will each appear worthy of a thousand deaths; for they are the scum and offscouring of the whole community; who, having wasted in debaucheries their own goods, and made it their sport to plunder and destroy the surrounding villages, clandestinely flocked into this city. They are robbers, who by their im-

pious excesses have polluted this holy place; who are now seen in the sanctuary drinking to intoxication, and lavishing on their insatiable appetites the substance of those whom they have slain. There is not one who has not suffered from their impious attacks; and so abandoned are they become, that they have transferred their audacious robberies out of the country, and the remote cities into this, the head and heart of the whole nation, and out of the city into the very temple, which they now have made their receptacle and refuge, and from which they prepare to attack us: and thus the sanctuary which is revered and admired by every nation, is contaminated by those wild beasts born among ourselves. In the midst of their desperate acts, they triumph when they hear that one people is preparing to fight with another people; that one city with another city, and that your nation is raising an army against its own bowels.*" In another place Josephus says, "It is impossibe to enumerate every instance of the iniquity of those men: but, in a word, never did any city suffer such great calamities, nor was there ever from the beginning of the world any time more fruitful in wickedness than that. These were the men who overthrew the city, and compelled the

*J. W. lib. 4. c. 3, § 9.

Romans to gain an unwelcome victory. They did little less than throw fire upon the temple, and seemed to think it came too slowly.*"

Finally, our Lord foretold, that the destruction of Jerusalem would be preceded by great signs and fearful wonders. Josephus in the Jewish War has recorded such signs and wonders, preceding the fall of the city; and he represents them as warnings from God. There is no room to doubt but that Josephus has related the phenomena which Jesus has predicted, and he must have known them to be the fulfilment of that prediction.

The circumstance that the gnostic teachers were the robbers of whom Josephus speaks, places in a new point of light many passages of the four gospels, and accounts for a charge generally alleged against the christians in very early times.

"Then said Jesus unto them again, I am the door of the sheep. All that came before me are *thieves and robbers*." From the remark which the evangelist subjoins to this discourse, whence this verse is taken, we might conclude, that the thieves and robbers here intended, had some connection with John the Baptist, "And he went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where

* J. W. lib. 5, c. 10. § 4, 5.

John at first baptized, and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said John did no miracle; but all things that John spake of this man are true. And many believed on him there." John x. 40. The design of the evangelist in relating the discourses which Jesus now held with the pharisees, and which characterises them as thieves and robbers, was the following: These endeavoured to set aside the claims of our Lord, by representing the Baptist as his superior. To defeat this opinion, the beloved disciple cites the testimony of the very people, among whom John and Jesus had taught and acted; and he thus makes it appear from their own language, that the former was subordinate in authority and power to the latter. The false teachers were not only robbers in a metaphorical sense, as they attempted to rob the Saviour of his glory; but they were literally so; and hence the terms thieves and robbers, which might otherwise sound harsh, are applied to them with the strictest propriety. Many of the impostors to whom Jesus here alludes, as having been disciples of the Baptist, preceded him in years, and hence it is that he represents them as come *before* him.

"Then said one unto him, Lord are there few that be saved? And he said, strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When

once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door, (i. e. hath risen up *to* shut the door) and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door; saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us: and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not whence you are." Luke xiii. 23. Our divine master, as is well known, was in the habit of copying the subjects of his discourses, and even his figures of speech, from the habits or opinions of the people whom he addressed; and as he possessed a distinct foreknowledge of all the circumstances of his gospel yet in futurity, he had associated those false prophets or teachers, who should delude the many from the true faith, with the character of thieves going about in the night to rob people's houses. Hence he represents himself as rejecting them from his own peculiar favour, or from the church which his virtuous followers would form after his resurrection, under allusion to a householder *rising* from his seat, to bolt his door, against robbers in the night. His meaning is to this effect, "As a master of a family, when night is advanced, rises from his seat, fastens the door, and thus refuses admission to such as may knock, from suspicion that they are thieves and murderers; so I, when I shall have *risen* from the dead, and come as a bridegroom at midnight, the hour ye least expect, while those who are ready shall enter with me into the

marriage feast, will fasten the door against you, whom I know not, whom as workers of iniquity I acknowledge not for my disciples."

As the robbers acknowledged the divine authority of Christ, and thus in a certain sense affected to be christians, while their character and their doctrines were calculated to dishonour and undermine the gospel, it was of the first importance that the Saviour should deliver his opinion, in regard to their claims to be in the number of his followers. Accordingly he declares, in a language the most unequivocal and explicit, that he should not acknowledge them as his disciples. "Then ye shall begin to say, we have eaten and drank in thy presence; and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." Luke xiii. 26. It is observable, that our Lord does not return an answer to the question above proposed to him, respecting the number of those to be saved. As soon as it was put, his imagination fastened itself on the baleful success which the impostors, by their specious arts, would meet with in deluding the multitude, and he lost sight of the question, by the train of ideas which that question alone excited in his mind. It is remarkable that Matthew, in in the parallel passage, as Luke does in this, exhibits the same powerful current of associations

gliding through the mind of Jesus, though they have nothing else in common, but the same subject of discourse.

"And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it *a den of thieves.*" Mat. xxi. 12. If we compare this incident with John ii. 14, we might conclude, that Jesus did an act like this, near the commencement of his ministry; and the language which he then used, was more mild and appropriate. But he was now at the close, and addressing those robbers, who, though the worst enemies to him and his religion, would affect to believe in him. He had the fall of Jerusalem, and the profanation of the temple, full before his views, and the language of Josephus respecting the robbers, is the only true commentary on his meaning, when he says, that they made the temple *a den of thieves.* "They are *thieves,*" says that historian, "who by their impious excesses have polluted this holy place, and are now seen in the temple drinking to intoxication, and lavishing on their insatiable appetites the goods of those whom they have slain."

The riot and luxury in which the zealots indulged, and which Josephus obliquely asserts in this place, are frequently alluded to in the New Testament. The apostle Paul with truth says of them, "They are not servants of the Lord Jesus, but of their own bellies." Rom. xvi. 18; and in Phil. iii. 18, as denying the crucifixion of Christ, he calls them, with equal justice, "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, and whose god is their belly." Peter and Jude, on account of the excesses which those wicked men committed, say that they were foul stains on the *agapæ*, or love feasts, celebrated by the christians: and this feature in their character is not overlooked by our Lord, when addressing them; "Then ye shall begin to say, *we have eaten and drunk in thy presence*, and thou hast taught in our streets." Luke xii. 26.

From this account of the gnostic impostors, as we find their character drawn by Josephus, we are able to trace to its origin the charge of theft and robberies, imputed by their enemies to the early christians. Chrysostom, in a passage which has occasioned some perplexity to the critics, asserts that the Esseans were *thieves* and *robbers*. This charge, though true to a certain extent, would have come with more grace from an enemy than a friend of the gospel, as it extends to all

the Jewish believers, the crimes of which a few only were guilty. Tacitus insinuates, that all the Jews in Rome were robbers; and banished to the island of Sardinia, as a place suited to restrain them from robberies. The monument erected in honour of Nero, for his endeavours to exterminate the christians, asserts the same thing in more direct terms. Justin Martyr, in his second apology, has recorded the following words, which a man named Lucius had addressed to *Urbicius*, a Roman magistrate, because of an unjust sentence passed by him on an innocent christian. "Why should you condemn a man, convicted neither of adultery nor fornication, nor proved to be a *murderer*, nor a *thief*, nor a *robber*; nor finally convicted of any other crime, but only of professing the christian name."

Against this charge, which was made without enquiry, by those who opposed the gospel, the language of Pliny is directed, and contains an acknowledgment of its falsehood; "They are accustomed to bind themselves by an oath, not to commit *murder*, nor *thefts*, nor *robberies*, nor adultery." The words of Josephus are still more remarkable, "Besides these things, they (namely the Esseans) bind the newly received member, not to teach any man the doctrines of the sect, otherwise than he has himself received them: to abstain from robberies, and to preserve their

sacred books with the names of their ministers unadulterated." It is worthy of observation, that the crime of robbery is here connected with adulterating the sacred books, as if some of the Esseans had been guilty of corrupting them; while the virtuous part of that sect wished to guard against this by the most solemn obligations. Now it is an indisputable fact, that the gnostic impostors, or robbers as they are called by Josephus, did adulterate the christian scriptures; and it is equally certain, that the charge of altering the evangelical records was hence urged against all the followers of Christ. "Some of the believers," says Celsus, "as if they were drunk, take the liberty to alter the gospel from its original form, three or four ways or oftener, that when they are pressed hard, and one reading has been confuted, they may disown that and flee to another*." This accusation was doubtless made from the beginning, and hence the precaution which the Esseans adopted, of binding every new convert by a sacred oath, to abstain from robbery, and to preserve their sacred books authentic and unchanged.

"Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like to whited sepulchres, which

* Orig. Contra Cels. p. 77.

indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up then the measures of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? Wherefore behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.

Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Mat. xxiii. 27.

In illustration of this passage, I shall quote another from Josephus, whose history is the best commentary on the words of our Lord; "The affairs of the Jews continually grew worse, and the country was filled with robbers and impostors, who deceived the people. But many of these Felix daily apprehended and put to death; and in the number Eleazer, the son of Dineas, who commanded a body of robbers. Felix had also an enmity against Jonathan the high-priest, who frequently admonished him to manage the Jewish affairs with more equity and wisdom, he having been the person who advised Cæsar to appoint him as procurator of Judea. So Felix planned a scheme to get rid of a man, who was become so very troublesome to him. For this reason he prevailed on a person named Doras, one of Jonathan's most intimate friends, and a native of Jerusalem, to betray Jonathan to the robbers, to be murdered by them, promising him for this large sums of money. With this offer Doras complied; and he brought the robbers upon his friend in the following manner. Some of the robbers went up to Jerusalem, under pretence of worshipping God, with daggers under their garments.

There they slew Jonathan, the assassins having mingled with the multitude which accompanied him in public. This murder being left unpunished, the robbers after that ascended to the feast without any apprehension, having weapons as before concealed under their clothes. There mingling with the crowd, they slew some who were their enemies; others whom they were hired to slay. And this they did not only in other parts of the city, but some also in the temple. For even in that sacred place they had the audacity to massacre; nor did they think that they were committing impiety. But I am of opinion that on this account, God, who hates impiety, has demolished our city; and regarding the temple as no longer a pure habitation for himself, brought upon us the Romans, and exposed it and the city to purifying fire, and ourselves with our wives and our children to slavery, wishing that we might learn virtue from our calamities." Antt. lib. 20. c. 8. § 5.

In the beginning of the next chapter the same writer continues, "The emperor having been informed of the death of Festus, sent Albinus to be præfect in Judea, and the king (meaning Agrippa) took away the high-priesthood from Joseph, and bestowed that dignity upon the son of Ananus, who was also named Ananus. This younger Ananus, now made high-priest, was

fierce in his temper, and exceedingly daring *. He was, moreover, of the sect of the Sadducees, who above all other Jews are cruel in their judicial sentences. This being the character of Ananus, and thinking he had a fit opportunity, because Festus was dead, and Albinus was yet on the road, he calls a council of judges; and bringing before them James, the brother of him who is called Christ, and some others, he accused them with being transgressors of the law, and

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* This Ananus paid the price of his cruelty and guilt towards James, for he was in his turn murdered, and that by the very men whom he probably suborned to murder the apostle. His body being denied the rite of interment, which to the Jews was more terrible than death, was exposed to be the food of dogs and wild beasts. When Josephus speaks of his death, he places his character in a very different light; and says that he was one of those, on whose account Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and that virtue itself wept over his unhappy fate. See J. W. lib. 4. c. 5. § 2. I can not well account, why Josephus should thus speak of a man, who had imbrued his hands in the blood of the christians, and whom he represents on that account as fierce in his temper, and exceedingly daring. Did a change take place in the character and views of Ananus? He might possibly become sensible of the guilt, which he incurred in putting James to death, and repent. Such repentance was not uncommon in those days. The conversion of Saul was an instance of the same kind.

delivered them up to be stoned. But the most equitable men of the city, and those who were most accurate in the knowledge of the laws, were grievously offended at these proceedings. They, therefore, sent privately to the king, entreating him to send orders to Ananus no more to attempt such things. And some went away to meet Albinus, who was coming from Alexandria, and reminded him that he had no right to appoint a council without his authority. Albinus, approving of what they said, wrote to Ananus in much anger, threatening to punish him for what he had done: and king Agrippa took away from him the high-priesthood, after he had enjoyed it three months, and put in Jesus, son of Damneus."

In this passage it is stated, that the Sadducees were more severe than other Jews in the administration of justice; and that this severity led Ananus, who was one of them, to pass upon James and others the sentence of condemnation. This is true, and exactly accords with the account given of that sect in the Acts of the Apostles. There we are led to conclude, that the Sadducees opposed the apostles with more violence than the Pharisees, because they taught what that sect denied, a life to come, and the resurrection of the dead; and for the truth of

their doctrine appealed to the resurrection of Jesus.

In this passage we may further remark the very great caution with which Josephus censures the conduct of Ananus, and vindicates the innocence of James and his fellow-sufferers. He does not himself pass this censure on their unjust judge, or apply any epithet which merely marks his own disapprobation, but puts it in the mouth of others. "The most equitable men of the city, and those who had the most accurate knowledge of the laws, were *grievously offended* at this measure*, and they *privately* send messengers complaining of it to Albinus." The historian too calls in the testimonies of the præfect and of Agrippa, to prove the injustice and violence of the act; the former of whom writes to Ananus with much anger; the latter deprives him of his priesthood on account of it.

It appears, moreover, from this passage, that the advocates of spiritual judaism, or, as we should say, of christianity, were at this time become very strong even among the principal men

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* Οσοι δε εδοκουν επιεικεστατοι των κατα την πολιν ειναι, και τα περι τους νομους ακριβεις, βαρεως ηνεγκαν επι τουτῳ. Ant. lib. 20. c. 9.

of the city. James and his fellow-sufferers were accused by Ananus and his party with being transgressors of the laws: but the most equitable, and those who had the most accurate knowledge of the laws, thought otherwise. They therefore had the same views of the Jewish religion with the apostle: in other words, they were believers in Christ. And here we have the indirect testimony of Josephus, that the most virtuous and wise portion of the Jews, even among the principal men of Jerusalem, had at this time acceded to the christian doctrine.

This historian, it is to be observed, does not say *where* James and others were stoned, but only that a sentence of this kind was delivered against him by Ananus. But Hegesippus, a writer of the second century, tells us, that James was stoned in the courts of the temple. If the account of both these writers be taken as true, we are to infer that, after a mock trial of James and his associates, the mob were let loose upon them; who, instead of conducting the innocent victims out of the temple, which they had perhaps orders to do, vented their fury upon them in that place.

Origen, in his commentary on Matthew xiii. 55. speaks to this effect. "This James is he, whom Paul mentions in his epistle to the Galatians, saying, Others of the apostles saw I none, save

James the Lord's brother. This James was in so great repute with the people, that Josephus, who wrote twenty books of the Jewish Antiquities, desirous to assign the reason of their suffering such things, says, that it was owing to the anger of God for what they did to James, the brother of Jesus, called Christ. And it is wonderful, that he who did not believe our Jesus to be the Christ, should bear such a testimony to our James. He also says, that the people thought theysuffered these things upon account of James." These things are asserted also by Eusebius and Jerome, who depended, no doubt, on the authority of Origen. But modern critics are of opinion, that the paragraph to which Origen alludes, does not at present exist in the works of Josephus. This, however, I conceive to be a mistake. The Jewish historian, after saying that the murder of Jonathan was left unpunished, observes, that the robbers ascended on subsequent occasions to the feast without apprehension, and murdered some whom they thought their enemies, and others whom they were suborned so to do. Origen understood from Josephus, that the persons so slain from time to time were for the most part believers in Christ, and that James himself fell in the number. This apostle had high reputation for equity and wisdom; the supporters of the gospel were numerous and power-

ful, and the sentence was allowed to be unjust. For these reasons, Ananus and his party felt it difficult or dangerous to execute the sentence delivered against James and his associates, and therefore suborned the robbers, either openly or in secret to destroy them. If this were the case, James was one of those, to whose murder Josephus ascribes the destruction of the city and temple. The historian, it is true, does not say, that this was done on account of James, but on account of *all* the persons who suffered in Jerusalem and in the temple; that is, on account of the followers of Jesus in general. As, however, James is the only person whom Josephus has specified by name, Origen thought himself justified, though he certainly was not, in saying, that in vengeance of him these calamities befel the Jews. Origen, it is farther to be noticed, observes, that Josephus *styles* our apostle *a very just man*. But he does not speak thus of him. It is, however, very plain, that he *thought* him a most just man, and labours without expressing it to impress that idea on his readers. Origen drew the proper inference; and therefore without injustice made him speak what he only meant.

Origen asserts, that Josephus did not believe in our Jesus as the Christ. This assertion is not true; and there is reason to apprehend that Origen knew it not to be true. That learned, but

uncandid apologist, thoroughly comprehended the works of Josephus; and therefore needed not to be informed, that they suppose the truth of christianity, and contain apologies for Christ and his followers among the Jews, under the name of Esseans. But the Jewish believers, and Josephus in the number, as we shall see hereafter, did not believe certain doctrines, which Origen thought essential to christianity. For this reason the Greek and Latin fathers held them in detestation, and would not allow them to be believers in Jesus. The same illiberal spirit is not extinct in the present more enlightened age; and if posterity were to judge of Doctor Priestley by what some of his adversaries have said of him, he should be classed by future generations rather among the sceptics, than the christians of the eighteenth century.

I shall now revert to the above passage of Matthew, and offer a few remarks more immediately in illustration of it.

First, the Scribes and Pharisees, on whom our Lord there denounces woes, were the very same with the robbers or zealots mentioned by Josephus, or such of the Scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees, as united with those wicked men in opposition to the gospel. This conclusion we may draw, because he holds them up as *full of iniquity*, that is, full of that atheistic or anti-

nomian system, which the zealots or gnostics opposed to spiritual judaism. In reference to the *serpent*, of which by their apostacy they became abettors, he farther characterizes them as "serpents and a race of vipers." Because, further, Jesus speaks of them *by anticipation*, and notices not only the crimes which they had already committed, but the murders which they were in a subsequent period to commit. Finally, because he intimates, that on account of those murders the city and temple would be destroyed. This intimation completely identifies them with the zealots and robbers. "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men and scribes; and some of them ye *shall* kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city." This language was prophetic. Josephus has related the fulfilment of it, and holds up the agents in it under the name of zealots. The zealots, therefore, and the men whom our Saviour here denounces, are the same people. "Even in the sacred place," says Josephus, "they had the audacity to massacre. And I am of opinion that, on this account, God, who hates impiety, has demolished our city; and regarding the temple as no longer a pure habitation for himself, brought upon us the Romans, and exposed it, with the city, to purifying fire." And in an-

other place he thus addresses John of Gischala. "Who does not know the warnings of the ancient prophets? Who does not see that the oracle, which has long been advancing against this wretched city, is now at hand: for they foretold that it would be taken, when its inhabitants would stain it with their own blood? Is not the city and the whole temple filled with your dead bodies? It is therefore God, God himself, that brings upon you the Romans, like a purifying fire, and extirpates the city as abounding with such great abominations." J. W. lib. 6. c. 2. 1.

Secondly, the consideration that the men, whom our Lord here denounces, were the zealots described by Josephus, brings to light the import of the following passage, which has occasioned much perplexity to the critics. "That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." Here our Lord speaks as a prophet; and assuming the usual style of prophecy, he represents them as actually guilty of that blood which they were yet to shed. That he speaks by anticipation of the murder of Zacharias, is evident from the context: for he assures those impious men, that they SHALL kill those teachers of the gospel who were to be sent to them. He in-

stances Zacharias, who was to fall the last victim to their cruelty: and in order to give his murder all the certainty of a real event, he represents it as actually done, though yet in futurity*. He uses the same prophetic liberty when he says, "Behold your house IS left unto you desolate." The temple was not at this time desolate; but he means, "Behold your house WILL be left desolate." To prevent the misconstruction of his figure, and to preclude the men whom he ad-

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* The verb in the original is in the *first aorist*—εφονευσατε. For the exact sense of this tense I refer to my Greek Grammar, p. 266, second edition. And I here quote the note of Havercamp on the place in Josephus. B. J. lib. 4. c. 5. §. 4. Eundum esse hunc Zachariam cum illo cujus meminit servator apud Matth. xxiii. 35. statuit L'Empereur in Cod. Talm. Middoth, p. 80. verba autem Servatoris intelligenda esse per anticipationem; et *aoristum* positum esse pro *futuro*, ὃν εφονευσατε, *quem occideritis;* atque hujusmodi usus *aoristi* familiaris est Josepho, itidemque *Polybio historico*, ut ad eum notavit *Isaacus Causabonus*.

A priest, named Zacharias, is mentioned in 2 Chron. x. 24, 26. as being stoned in the court of the house of the Lord. And learned men suppose, that to this Zacharias our Saviour alludes. But this is not the case: first, because he is said to be the *son of Jehoida;* secondly, because it would be inappropriate to notice that Zacharias, the argument requiring that, as Abel is mentioned in the beginning, the other to be specified should be found at the end of the Jewish dispensation.

dressed from supposing that he charged them with blood which they had never shed, he adds, "Verily, I say unto you, all these things *shall come* upon this generation."

Now Josephus has actually related the event to which our Lord alludes. "The zealots at length, loathing to murder, set up in mere derision a mock tribunal, by which they determined to condemn Zacharias, son of Baruchus, one of the most eminent among the citizens. The causes, which kindled their resentment against this man, were his known hatred of wickedness and love of liberty, the hope of plunder awakened by his great wealth, and the dread of a power which threatened their dissolution. They nominated seventy of the people, to whom they gave the form, without the power, of judges. Before these they accused him of betraying the state to the Romans, and of negociating with Vespasian for that purpose. This charge was not supported by any evidence; they only expressed their conviction of the fact, and this they considered as a demonstration of its truth. Zacharias seeing that he had no hopes of acquittal, that he was brought into a snare, and not before a just tribunal, used in despair of life the greatest freedom of speech. He treated with scorn the alleged probability of the charges, and briefly proved them to be altogether unfounded. Then

addressing himself with firmness to his accusers, he distinctly enumerated all the enormities which they had committed, and wept with loud lamentation over the disorders which they had occasioned in the state. The zealots became tumultuous, and scarcely refrained from drawing their swords. But they wished to preserve to the end the appearance of justice, being at the same time desirous to see whether the judges, at the risk of their lives, should obey its dictates. The seventy passed on the accused the sentence of *not guilty*, preferring to die with him rather than incur the guilt of being his murderers. On his acquittal the zealots raised a violent clamour, and all expressed their indignation at the judges, for not understanding that they were invested only with the semblance of power. Two of the most daring, falling upon Zacharias, slew him in the middle of the temple, sarcastically saying as he fell, Thou hast also our verdict, which will more effectually acquit thee: and they immediately flung his body into the valley, which lay beneath. They drove the judges from the court with insult, even smiting them with the back of their swords; and refrained from slaughtering them only that they might disperse among the people, and thus be the heralds of their slavery and degradation."

If we compare this narrative with the words

of our Lord, they will appear to agree with great exactness. The zealots, as the apostle says, went in the way of Cain, and for this reason were sometimes called *Cainists*. This is the reason why our Lord mentions the blood of Abel, which the villains had shed in the person of their representative. The murder of that righteous man was at the dawn of the Jewish dispensation, and the purport of our Saviour's argument required, that he should carry forward his ideas through the whole extent of it to the last crime of the same sort. As they shed the blood of Abel by Cain who represented them; so they *personally* were to shed the blood of those christian teachers whom God would send to them from the first to the last. Accordingly, Jesus mentions the murder of Zacharias; and Josephus actually represents his blood as the last which the assassins had the iniquity to shed. Our Lord and Josephus moreover agree in the place of his death, and also in holding him forth as a *righteous* man. We may therefore conclude, that he was now a convert to the gospel.

CHAPTER XXI.

JOSEPHUS'S REFUTATION OF APION, AND OTHERS WHO WROTE AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

THE writings of Josephus, when first published, though highly prized by the wise and good, necessarily called forth the opposition of enemies. His countryman, Justus of Tiberias, attempted to invalidate his history of the Jewish War; and for this attempt we are chiefly indebted for the Memoirs of his Life. His Antiquities of the Jews provoked similar discussion. Many writers, it seems, envying the reputation of the author, and hating the cause which he so powerfully supported, endeavoured either directly or indirectly to impugn his authority.

In reply to such writers he observes, that "Some wicked men have attempted to vilify my writings, representing them as the performances of a school-boy, produced by way of exercise. This representation is indeed strange and calumnious. He, who undertakes to give others a

narrative of true events, ought to be thoroughly acquainted with their truth, either by being himself present when they occurred, or by being accurately informed of those who were. These qualifications I claim in regard to both of my works: for I translated the *Antiquities* out of our sacred books, which, as being a priest, and having studied the wisdom contained in them, I was well able to do. And as to the History of the War, I was an agent in many, and a spectator of almost all its transactions; nor was there any thing of consequence said or done in its progress, with which I was unacquainted. How impudent then must those men be deemed, who dispute my veracity, or question the truth of my narrative? *Against Apion*, lib. i. §. 10.

In the number of those who wrote against the Jews and the gospel, was Apion, a scribe of Alexandria, and a man of wit and learning, yet profligate, malicious, and eager to oppose the truth by violence and falsehood. In his book he detailed the common calumnies against the Jews, and blended them with so much scurrility and fiction, that he would have been unworthy of notice, if his wit and buffoonery had not left on many an unfavourable impression. Under the auspices of Epaphroditus, the illustrious friend of the apostle Paul, Josephus undertook the defence of the Jews and their religion against this gram-

marian; and he gave to the public a work which has never been equalled, for the solidity of his conclusions, or the profundity and extent of his researches. In his former compositions Josephus shews himself only a plain, ingenious commentator, or an artless but able historian; in his work against Apion, he rises on his readers, and displays in a high degree the united powers of learning, argument, and oratory. Though confined, till a late period, to the language and philosophy of the Hebrews, he soon acquired a wonderful acquaintance with the dialect and literature of Greece. His powerful mind, in a short period, seems to have grasped the whole extent of the Phœnician, Chaldean, Egyptian, and Grecian records; and with the authority of those records overwhelmed all the enemies of the Jews and of the gospel: thus refuting them on their own grounds, and sweeping away their falsehoods and calumnies as with the force of a torrent.

Our author has divided the work into two parts*, and performed far more than is promised

* A part of this work is unfortunately lost. For the words of Porphyry imply, that Josephus had inserted an account of the Esseans in the second book against Apion. This is a fact of importance. Josephus is here an apologist of the Jewish Christians, and their cause; and it was na-

by the title. For in the first book he refutes the misrepresentations of Manetho, Cheremon, Ly-

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tural for him to draw a character of these men in the work which he published in their defence. And here it may seem wonderful, that the works of Josephus, who was so obnoxious both to the Jews and to the Christians, should have descended at all, or descended so perfect to us, as they have done. Yet a most daring attempt has been made to set them aside. A Jew who lived in France about the ninth or tenth century, personated our Josephus under the name of *Joseph Ben Gorion*. From the writings of Josephus he composed a new work full of falsehoods, but adapted to the prejudices of the Jews. From this, as we might expect, the impostor has excluded every thing in the works of Josephus favourable to Christ and his followers. He was aware of the high credit which is due to Josephus. Accordingly, while personating him, he thus speaks of himself: "Thus says Joseph Ben Gorion, the priest, who has written the things which have happened to Israel, and his calamities, to be a memorial and instruction to his posterity. ....From this day and henceforward this book is to be a testimony to other writers who shall come after me, and attempt to write of the same things, and shall allege proofs of what they write. For they will say, So and so has recorded Joseph the priest, who is the prince of all writers." Gagnier has published an edition of this work, and he observes in his Preface, "that all Jewish writers, whether commentators, or historians, or philologers, continually allege it, and quote authorities and testimonies from it, as an authentic and fundamental book. ....As for the Greek Josephus, they have little regard for him, or rather none at all; but declaim against him as a lying historian, full of falsehoods and flat-

simachus, and others; the second only contains his reply to Apion; but the latter part withal comprehends many interesting reflections on the character and laws of Moses. With matchless simplicity and energy he evinces the superior excellence of the Jewish, and under the name of Jewish, the Christian Dispensation, holding forth the Almighty for its author, the virtue and happiness of mankind for its end, and the experience of ages for its utility and truth. If Josephus had been a Jew in the modern sense, we could not but admire the love of truth, the diligence and learning displayed in the work; we could not but be thankful to him for his information respecting records of which we should have known little or nothing without him; but our gratitude and admiration will be greatly increased by the reflection, that the champion of

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teries. But their Josippon they extol and magnify as true, and almost divine." See Lard. Vol. vii. p. 162.

The hatred of the Jews against Josephus shews clearly that they knew him to be a christian, and a christian writer; and the circumstance that he was not known to have been a christian, or given up as such by all the advocates of christianity in the dark ages, occasioned the imposture of Joseph Ben Gorion. Josephus was not in favour with either party; and this Josippon thought a fine opportunity to supersede a writer, who bears so formidable a testimony in favour of the gospel, and against his own nation.

the Jews is the advocate of Christ, and that the cause in which he so signally triumphs, involves the dearest hopes and happiness of mankind.

The calumnies of Apion and others against the Jews, are not sufficiently interesting to be inserted in this place*; I shall therefore pass by

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* "As to the writings of Apion," says our author, "I seriously thought them unworthy of an answer. For the charges alleged by him are similar to those which have been made by others. The things which he has added are frigid and despicable: they shew in most places great scurrility and profaneness, and, if I may be permitted to speak the truth, great ignorance; nor could they come from any man, who was not profligate in manners, and in life a mountebank." Contra Apion, lib. 2. § 1. Apion was contemporary with Philo, and the successful adversary of the Jews, during their persecution by Caligula. Philo appears to have held him in the greatest abhorrence and contempt; and this doubtless is the reason why he has never mentioned him, though he took an active part in distressing the Jews. In the fifth Homily ascribed to Clement, Apion is represented as disputing with that author, respecting the christian doctrine. He seems to have been among the first, who, in order to avoid the attack of the christians on the pagan gods, endeavoured to allegorize the popular language respecting them. Josephus has quoted, in a few instances, the words of his adversary; and I will select two of these, which will fully justify the character Josephus gives of this grammarian. After having spoken of the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, he thus accounts for their resting on the seventh day,

them, and select only a few passages, in which Josephus recommends the religion of Moses, and

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Οδευσαντες γαρ εξ ἡμερων ὁδον βουβωνας εσχον, και δια ταυτην την αιτιαν τη ἑβδομῃ ἡμερα ανεπαυσαντο, σωθεντες εις την χωραν την νυν Ιουδαιαν λεγομενην, και εκαλεσαν την ἡμεραν σαββατον, σωζοντες την Αιγυπτιων γλωτταν, το γαρ βουβωνος αλγος καλουσιν Αιγυπτιοι σαββατωσιν. Contra Apion, lib. 2. § 2. *Having journied six days, they had buboes on their groins. For this reason, after they had reached in safety that country which is now called Judea, they rested on the seventh day, and called it* SABBATH. *This in the language of Egypt, which they used, is called* SABBA, *and means a malady on the groins.*

Tacitus, we have seen, says that the Jews worshipped the ass, because a drove of asses shewed them a spring of water, when they were thirsty in the wilderness. This calumny was circulated by Apion before him; who says farther, that when Antiochus Epiphanes entered the temple to plunder it, he found there the head of an ass, made of gold. In hoc sacrario Apion præsumpsit edicere, "asini caput collocasse Judæos, et id colere, ac dignum facere tanta religione; et hoc affirmat fuisse depalatum, dum Antiochus Epiphanes et exspoliasset templum, et illud capud invenisset ex auro compositum multis pecuniis dignum," lib. 2. § 7. It has greatly puzzled the critics to divine the origin of this improbable calumny; and they missed it, I think, because they looked for it too remotely. The Jehovah of the Jews, in the Greek language, is emphatically called ὁ ων *the existing one.* This their profane enemies, by a mere pun, changed into ὁ ονος, the Greek name of THE ASS. The influence of erroneous etymology on the opinions and reasonings of the ancients,

under it, the religion of Jesus, to the pagan world.

"What* government," says he, "can be more pure, more honourable and worthy of God than this, in which all the people are trained up in piety, in which the priests are faithful and exemplary, and have its functions administered as one religious solemnity. Those institutions which strangers, as unable to conform to them for many days, brand as mysteries and rites, we practise all our lives with great delight and immoveable perseverance. And in what do these mysteries and rites consist? What do they enjoin or prohibit? They are simple and easily learnt. Their first object is to inculcate worthy notions of God; that he possesses all things, that he is all-perfect, ever blessed, and sufficient in himself, being the beginning, the middle, and end of all things; that

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was much more extensive than modern readers can well credit. Thus the similarity of Ιουδαιοι to *Ida*, gave birth to the fiction that the Jews came from Crete: In like manner, the similarity of σαββω to σαββατον, in all likelihood, occasioned the story of the *buboes* on their groins. Equally similar is ὁ ων to ὁ ονος, and equally likely was it to give rise to the report that the Jews worshipped *the ass*. What renders this probability still more probable is, that the Egyptians had ever spoken in terms of blasphemy and reproach of the God of Israel.

* Contra Apion, lib. 2. § 22, and the sections following.

he is most obvious to us in his works and in his gifts, but incomprehensible in his essence and majesty; that no materials however costly can represent, or no art however exquisite, can delineate his form; that we can neither see nor conceive any thing like him, nor is it lawful to draw his image. We see indeed the light, the heaven, the earth, the sun and moon, the succession of animals and of fruits—these are his works; he made them, not with hands, not with labour; nor did he need the co-operation of any. He simply wished all things to exist; and this fair and goodly system immediately came into being. It is the duty of all men to make him their model, to worship him in the exercise of virtue; for virtue is the worship most pure and acceptable in his sight.—We offer sacrifices not that we may fill ourselves to satiety and intoxication, which is not agreeable to the will of God, and which occasions infamy and extravagance, but that we may become as much as possible temperate, obedient and orderly. In our sacrifices we feel it our duty to pray first for the common good, and next for ourselves. For we deem ourselves born for the benefit of the community; and he who prefers the interests of others to his own, is most acceptable to God. Our addresses to him should consist of praise and prayer, not that he might give us good things, (for he freely gives to all, and that

unasked) but that by asking, we may become fit to receive, and having received, to keep them."

Josephus next enumerates the duties which the law enjoins in the more important relations of life, in order to shew how superior the Jewish were to all other laws. I shall select a few instances of the manner he recommends them, and through them the gospel to the Greeks and Romans; and we cannot wonder that multitudes in every place should abandon their own superstitious notions, and receive a religion so salutary rational, and simple. Respecting the duty of parents to their children, he says, "The law does not allow them at the birth of any of their children to indulge in expensive festivals, and thus give occasion to excess and drunkenness; but commands them from the beginning to bring them up in habits of sobriety, to teach them letters, to make them conversant with our institutions, to study the deeds of their ancestors, that they may imitate them; and that being educated in the laws, they may not transgress them, or that, if they did, they may have no excuse from ignorance."

"It provides also for the decent interment of the dead, prohibiting expensive funerals or costly monuments. It enjoins the duty of burying the deceased, only on the nearest relatives, but recommends it as a laudable act in all, who pass

a funeral to accompany it, and join in the lamentation."

"It enforces the reverence of parents next to that of God; and him who does not repay their kindness, or who in anywise neglects them, it delivers over to be stoned. It requires the young to honour their elders; for God is the oldest of all. It suffers us to conceal nothing from friends, for that is not friendship which does not put complete confidence; and it prohibits the revealing of secrets, though it should ever end in enmity. If a judge receives bribes his punishment is death. He who neglects a suppliant when he has power to relieve, is criminal. No one shall demand a trust which he had never deposited, nor touch any thing belonging to others. He who lends, is not to receive interest. These, and many other similar to these, are the regulations which mutually bind us in social harmony."

Having described the principles, by which the Jews became attached to each other, he next refutes the calumny that they were enemies to mankind, by shewing their willingness to extend to all the blessings which themselves enjoyed. "It is fit," adds he, "to see the benignity which our legislator inculcated towards strangers; for while he ordained that all men should be freely received into communion with us, he has wisely guarded against the corruption of our own insti-

tutions. All then that are willing to live under our laws are received with cordiality; and they learn from us, that affinity does not consist merely in the ties of blood, but in similarity of principles and practices. The strangers, indeed, who happen to live among us, are not permitted to join us in familiar intercourse. But he hath enforced towards these the performance of those offices, which are necessary in the conduct of life; such as to impart fire, water, and food, to those who need these things; to shew the way to the traveller, not to overlook the unburied dead, nor to indulge in wanton cruelty, even towards those who have proved themselves our enemies. He does not suffer us to waste their corn fields, nor to cut down their fruitful trees, nor to plunder even those who have fallen in battle. He commands us to protect all such as are taken in war, especially the women, against injury or violence. He hath so trained us up indeed to habits of meekness and humanity, that he hath not overlooked even brute animals, permitting only the lawful use of them, and prohibiting every thing beyond it; nor does he allow us to slay those animals which take shelter in our houses, thus imploring as it were our protection, nor to kill even in an enemy's country those which work for the service of man."

Josephus at the close thus briefly recapitulates the moral excellence of these laws; "I need not

say more in praise of them; they have been themselves examined, and are now known to inculcate not impiety, but piety the most genuine. They call upon us not to hate, but to embrace mankind, and to share with them our own goods. They studiously aim at righteousness, and are inimical to injustice. They banish idleness, extravagance and luxury, and teach industry, temperance and contentment. They forbid war as a pretext for covetousness and ambition, and train men to be brave only in defence of their principles. The punishments which they inflict are never evaded, and they are supported not by the sophistical eulogies, but by the actions, of those who are subject to them; and the preference which we give to deeds over mere professions, is a demonstration of their superior excellence. For this reason I confidently affirm, that we are become the instructors of other men, in most things that are truly good and honourable. For what can be more honourable than undeviating piety? What more just than obedience to the laws? What can be more desirable than that a nation should live with one another in love and harmony; that they should not quarrel in adversity, nor become insolent and turbulent in prosperity; that they should cultivate agriculture, and all the arts of peace, and shew their bravery only in unavoidable wars, being persuaded that God inspects

and governs all the actions of men? If such laws had been enjoined by any other legislator before Moses, we should have cheerfully embraced them with the gratitude which disciples owe to a master. But if we appear to have used them before all others, and to have been their real authors, the Apions and Molons, and those who, like them, delight in falsehood and calumny, are sufficiently refuted. To thee, O Epaphroditus, who lovest the truth, and to those who, like thee, wish to be informed about our laws and nation, I dedicate this and the foregoing book."

Here Josephus holds forth his belief of the gospel in terms sufficiently explicit, by characterizing an eminent believer in it, as one who *loved the truth.* In the commencement of his Antiquities, he intimates that, in the composition of that work, he wished to gratify those among the Greeks and Romans, who embraced christianity or were likely to embrace it. Here he is more express and unequivocal, by saying that he dedicated his work against Apion to such men as Epaphroditus. It is here worthy of remark, that the elevated and refined morality, which Josephus ascribes to the Jewish religion, belonged to it only as it was developed and perfected by Christ. A Jewish doctor would have given a very different account of the law of Moses: but Josephus, who was a christian, has described the moral influence

of it, as one of the apostles, or as Christ himself would have done*. Having thus spoken of the moral effects of the divine law, he thus notices its great sanction, the doctrine of a future state.

"The reward of those, who live in every respect conformably to our laws, is not silver, or gold, or a garland of olive, or of smallage or some such honour, but the firm conviction, which each

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* From our Lord's discourse on the mount, we perceive the imperfect and, in many instances, the false notions which the Scribes and Pharisees had of the Mosaic law. Having proposed juster and more complete rules of conduct, than those on which they acted, Jesus adds, "Therefore all things whatsoever you wish that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. viii. 12. Which is to this effect, "The object of the law is not to teach us to observe external rites, but to transfer to others the interest which we feel in ourselves, to improve the *selfish* into *social* love, and to make this principle which implies equity, candour, and every other laudable quality, whenever we are ourselves the object of it, the rule of our behaviour to those around us." With the same just and elevated views of the law, St. Paul says, Rom. xiii. 8. "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth others hath fulfilled the law." In the same spirit St. James writes, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." chap. i. 26. Of these holy and wise men Josephus was a disciple, and he has given the same just description of the law which they every where inculcate.

of us entertains, that after a revolution of years, we shall receive a better life, our lawgiver having foretold this, and God having confirmed it by a decisive pledge. For this reason we stedfastly adhere to our laws, and if necessary cheerfully die for them. And I should have been reluctant to write these things, if it had not been proved by facts, and made known to all men, that multitudes in many places have bravely submitted to every species of torture, rather than even in words renounce our law *."

This is a remarkable and important passage, as Josephus not only alludes, but attests in very plain terms, the great and distinguishing doctrine of the gospel—the doctrine of a future state,

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* Τοις μεντοιγε κατα τους νομους παντα πραττουσι, το γερας εσι ουκ αργυρος, ουδε χρυσος, ου μην ουδε κοτινου σεφανος, η σελινου, και τοιαυτη τις ανακηρυξις, αλλα αυτος εκαστος αυτῳ το συνειδος εχων μαρτυρουν, πεπιστευκε· του μεν νομοθετου προφητευσαντος, του δε θεου την πιστιν ισχυραν παρεσχηκοτος, ὁτι τοις τους νομους διαφυλαξασι, καν ει δεοι θνησκειν ὑπερ αυτων προθυμως αποθανουσιν, εδωκεν ὁ θεος γενεσθαι τε παλιν, και βιον αμεινω λαβειν εκ περιτροπης. ωκνουν δ' αν εγω νυν ταυτα γραφειν· ει μη δια των εργων ἁπασιν ην φανερον, ὁτι πολλοι και πολλακις ηδη των ἡμετερων, περι του μηδε ῥημα φθεγξασθαι παρα τον νομον, παντα παθειν γενναιως προειλοντο. § 30.

founded on a decisive pledge which God has vouchsafed to give. The only decisive pledge, which God has given of this assurance is the resurrection of Christ. To this, therefore, Josephus must allude; and the allusion is rendered unequivocal by his own testimony, that Jesus appeared again alive the third day, the divine prophets having foretold his resurrection with innumerable other things respecting him. Besides, this doctrine, at the period in which Josephus wrote, had been preached to every nation; and numbers of those who embraced it, died in attestation of its truth: and to these professors and martyrs he refers, when he says, "It was proved by facts, and made known to all men, that multitudes, in various places, have bravely submitted to every species of torture, rather than even in words to renounce our law."

"Notwithstanding these facts, the Lysimachi, the Molons, and other such abandoned writers, who by their sophistry mislead the young and unexperienced, reproach us as the vilest of mankind. I am not anxious to enquire about the laws of other nations, for it is our custom rather to maintain our own, than call in question the institutions of others. For our lawgiver has expressly forbidden us to revile the gods of the nations, in order that the name of the true God might not be profaned. But as our defamers

think to degrade us by a comparison of their gods with our God, it is not possible to be silent, especially as the observations I am going to make, are not for the first time advanced by me, but have been made by many other highly approved writers. For who among the Greeks eminent for wisdom, has not charged even the most celebrated of the poets and legislators with disseminating among the people unworthy notions of their gods? According to these poets, the gods are as numerous as their imagination can make them, and are begotten one from another, and that by every mode of generation. Like the several classes of animals, they are distinguished by their situations and modes of living, some being under the earth, others in the sea, and the most venerable of them bound in Tartarus. The celestial gods have over them one who, in words, is called a father, but in deeds is an arbitrary lord and master. For this reason his wife, and brother, and daughter, whom he produced from his skull, conspired against him, in order to bind and confine him, as he himself had bound his own father."

"The truly wise hold these notions highly censurable, and they withal ridicule the idea, that some of the gods are young and beardless, others of them with beard and aged; that some again engage in trade, one being a smith, another a

weaver, a third a soldier fighting with men; while some are fidlers, and delight in archery; that they squabble about the disputes of men, and not only that, but lay violent hands on one another, and weep, and are in pain for the wounds received from the hands of men. But the most indecent of all is that the gods and goddesses engage in intrigues, and are guilty of the grossest impurities. Moreover their father and chief neglects those virgins whom he hath defloured, and suffers them to pine in prison or in the sea; nor can he save his own offspring, nor behold their death without tears, being himself controuled by a superior fate. Acts of adultery so prevail in heaven, that often some of the gods envy those who have been detected in committing it. And what might not all the other gods be expected to do, when the oldest and the principal of them is subject to the most intemperate lust. Moreover, some of the gods live as servants among men, one hiring himself to build, another to attend on flocks, while others are chained and confined in prison. Are these representations worthy the character of gods? What wise man can help being provoked, and compelled to reprobate both those who feign, and those who believe such gross fictions? Other writers have deified terror, fear, fury, fraud; and thus have degraded the divine by the worst affections of

human nature. Hence whole communities have been induced to offer sacrifice to the bad passions of men, as though they were gods, supplicating some of them as the givers of good things, and deprecating others as the averters of evil. Thus they endeavour to sooth them by gifts and favours, apprehending from them some great mischief, unless they received the accustomed reward."

In these two paragraphs we have a striking example, of the manner in which the christian teachers undermined the Pagan theology. The attack here made upon the heathen gods is irresistible, and their exposure to infamy and contempt most complete. Nevertheless Josephus displays his characteristic prudence and caution. He does not himself expose the wretched divinities of Greece and Rome, but brings forward their poets and legislators as the authors of it. Nor does he rest solely on the absurdity and impiety of such fictions, but appeals against them to the more enlightened and virtuous among the heathens; and he boldly asserts, that the supporters of paganism have ascribed such follies and wickedness to the objects of their worship, merely because they furnished a pretext to justify their own. The following passage contains a glorious testimony to the success, which the teachers of spiritual judaism met with in diffusing it among the Gentiles.

"We have already demonstrated, that our laws have been imitated by all nations, who continually more and more shew greater zeal in embracing them. For, first, the wise men who cultivated wisdom among the Greeks, have sanctioned institutions which in appearance are their own, but which in reality they have copied from our law-giver; cherishing with him the same notions of God, and like him inculcating simplicity, frugality, and mutual beneficence. Moreover, multitudes are for some time inflamed with eager zeal for our worship; nor is there a city among the Greeks, nor a nation among the barbarians, to whom many of our customs have not been extended; and who do not endeavour to imitate the cordiality and harmony, the distribution of their property, the industry in their callings, the patience under tortures in support of our laws, which are evinced among us. And what is most worthy of admiration in this respect is, that this zeal for our law is awakened, not by any allurement from pleasure or profit, but by the internal excellence of the law itself. And as God pervades the whole world, so his law has at length pervaded all mankind; and whoever reflects on his own country, and even his own family, will find evidence of the assertions now made by me. Let then those invidious men cease to accuse the Jews: or let them accuse those multitudes

among all nations, who have incurred the voluntary guilt of zealously embracing base and foreign, in the room of their own honourable institutions. We do not pursue any invidious object in admiring our legislator, or adhering to those promises which he has predicted that God would fulfil. And if we ourselves were not sensible of the superior excellence of our laws, we should fall below that multitude of converts who glory in them*."

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* Υφ ὑμων τε δηλεγχθησαν οἱ νομοι και τοις αλλοις ἁπασιν ανθρωποις, αει και μαλλον αυτων ζηλον εμποιησασι. πρωτοι μεν γαρ οἱ παρα τοις Ελλησι φιλοσοφησαντες, τῳ μεν δοκειν τα πατρια διεφυλαττον· εν δε τοις πραγμασι και τῳ φιλοσοφειν εκεινῳ κατηκολουθησαν, ὁμοια δε περι θεου φρονουντες, ευτελειαν δε βιου και την προς αλληλους κοινωνιαν διδασκουντες. ου μην αλλα και πληθεσιν ηδη πολυς ζηλος γεγονεν εκ μακρου της ἡμετερης ευσεβειας. ουδ' εστιν ου πολις Ελληνων, ουδητισουν ουδε βαρβαρος, ουδε ἐν εθνος, ενθα μη το της ἑβδομαδος ἡν αργουμεν ἡμεις, το εθος ου διεπεφοιτηκε· και νησειαι, και λυχνων ανακαυσις, και πολλα των εις βρωσιν ἡμιν ου νενομισμενων παρατετηρηται. μιμεισθαι δε πειρωνται και την προς αλληλους ἡμων ὁμονοιαν, και την των οντων αναδοσιν, και το φιλεργον εν ταις τεχναις και το καρτερικον εν ταις ὑπερ των νομων αναγκαις. το γαρ θαυμασιωτατον, ὁτι χωρις του της ἡδονης επαγωγου ου

After the many instances, in which we have seen Josephus speaking of the gospel in terms expressive of the Jewish religion, and of the converts to it from among the nations, under that of converts to the Jews, this passage can require no comment to illustrate, or to justify its meaning. About twenty years after its first promulgation, Philo asserts, that the doctrine of the Esseans, the life and immortality brought to light in the gospel, was communicated to the Greeks and to the barbarians; that by the example and zeal of its teachers, it was wafted, like incense on the breeze, to every quarter of the habitable

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δελεαζος αυτος καθ' αὑτον ισχυσεν ὁ νομος· και ὡσπερ ὁ θεος δια παντος του κοσμου πεφοιτηκεν, ὑυτως ὁ νομος δια παντων ανθρωπων βεβαδικεν. αυτος δε τις ἑκαζος την πατριδα και τον οικον επισκοπων τον αυτου, τοις ὑπ' εμου λεγομενοις ουκ απιζησει. χρη τοινυν παντων ανθρωπων καταγνωναι πονηριαν εθελουσιον, ει ταλλοτρια και φαυλα, προ των οικειων και καλων ζηλουν επιτεθυμηκασιν· η παυσασθαι βασκαινοντας ἡμιν τους κατηγορουντας. ουδε γαρ επιφθονου τινος αντιποιουμεθα πραγματος, τον αυτων νομοθετην τιμωντες, και τοις ὑπ' εκεινου προφητευθεισι περι του θεου πεπιζευκοτες. και γαρ ει μη συνιεμεν αυτοι της αρετης των νομων ἁπαντων, ὑπο του πληθους γουν των ζηλουντων μεγα φρονειν επ' αυτοις προηχθημεν. §. 39.

globe. During the course of forty years after Philo, or sixty after the resurrection of Jesus, the same system grew mighty, and prevailed; and Josephus, near the close of his life, was able to say, that there was no city among the Greeks or barbarians, where it was not known; that the word of God, like God himself, had pervaded the world, not a country, nor hardly a family existing, where its influence was not felt and acknowledged; that those heathens who had embraced it, practised the same virtues, and evinced, in support of it, the same patience and constancy with the Jews, who taught it, and died in attestation of its truth.

I SHALL now conclude with a few observations suggested by the facts brought to light in this volume, and worthy, it is presumed, the attention of mankind.

First, the providence of God has preserved the means of filling up, to a considerable extent, the chasm, which has occasioned so much regret, doubt, and uncertainty, in ecclesiastical history, from the apostolic age to the days of Justin Martyr. The writings of Philo and Josephus comprehend, one after another, the leading events which befel the Jews, from the advent of Christ

to the close of the first century; and these, in an eminent degree, illustrate and confirm the truth of the evangelical records. These authors were men of distinguished probity and talents; they were not only spectators of, but agents in, the great transactions which they record; and as they could not themselves be mistaken, they were raised by their integrity and honour above the wish of deceiving others.

Secondly, the gospel, when first published to the world, was far more rapidly and extensively diffused—the grounds on which it rested, namely, the miracles and resurrection of its founder, operated far more powerfully on the minds of men, whether Jews or heathens—the consequences of a political and a moral nature which it occasioned, in Judea and in other countries, were vastly more stupendous and lasting, than the generality of modern enquirers have hitherto imagined. This observation was particularly true in regard to the Jews. However small might have been the number of those who believed in Jesus at the period of his crucifixion, that number continually increased, as the genius of his religion, and the evidences of his divine mission gradually developed themselves, till about the destruction of the Jewish state, the nation was divided into two parties—the more virtuous and enlightened, who enlisted under the banners of Christ—and

the incorrigibly wicked, who evaded the justice of his claims, by plunging in atheism and idolatry. The signs exhibited by our Lord, and the consequent diffusion of christianity, awakened expectation, and produced disputes and convulsions, which could proceed from no other causes; and the certainty of these convulsions, recorded by Philo and Josephus, as having occurred not only in Jerusalem, but in Alexandria, Rome, and all the cities of the empire, absolutely prove the reality of those causes. If we judge of the efficacy and propagation of the gospel from the facts recorded by these writers, it is impossible not to infer, but that its teachers were actually invested with the miraculous powers ascribed to them in the New Testament. Thousands and tens of thousands, supposed to this day to have been strictly Jews, embraced it solely by virtue of those powers; and, being determined to support and to promote it, suffered death in attestation of its truth.

Thirdly, as Philo and Josephus defend the Christians under the name of Jews; so we may conclude, that Apion, Helicon, and others, who opposed and defamed the Jews, were opponents and defamers of the Christians and their cause. The works of those adversaries, who were contemporary with Philo and Josephus, and whose malice and misrepresentations contributed to call

forth their writings, have unfortunately been lost; but we clearly see, in the language and quotations of their illustrious antagonists, the nature of those arts, to which they had recourse, in order to defeat the gospel. Modern sceptics, in arguing against christianity, derive their arguments from its abuses, or from the unworthy inconsistent character of its professors, or from some errors and obscurities in its records, or finally from the incredible nature of miracles, the chief pillars on which it rests. Gibbon insinuates, that the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles were not real, because in the succeeding ages impostors arose, bearing the christian name, who affected to imitate them. Hume maintains, that miracles are incredible, because contrary to experience; and Paine, adding vulgarity to sophistry, pleads that men were more likely to tell lies, than the laws of nature to change. The sole grounds of modern sceptics, therefore, are ignorance, misrepresentation, the presumption of measuring the operations of God by their own experience, or of resting in their own want of experience, rather than believe the actual experience of former ages. Are these the grounds, on which the enemies of the gospel proceeded on its first promulgation? The question well deserves the attention of mankind,

and the reply to it affords abundant cause for joy and triumph.

The wonderful works done by our Lord and his apostles were so notorious, unequivocal, and incontrovertible; they were followed by consequences so palpable and permanent, not only on individuals, but in the world at large, that their enemies in no instance called them in question. They, therefore, conceded the truth of the christian miracles, and endeavoured to invalidate or explain them away, by referring them to the arts of magic, by vilifying their Almighty author as an evil Being, by ascribing similar wonders to the votaries of other gods, and finally, by ridiculing and defaming the Jews in general, and the Christian Jews in particular, thus imputing the foulest immoralities to the fairest patterns of virtue, and stigmatizing, as disturbers of society and haters of mankind, the benefactors of the world. The friends of the gospel in modern days cannot have a wish more gratifying, than to see it attacked on these grounds, and these grounds alone; and we may be assured, from the zeal and abilities of those who conducted the attack, that they could not erect their batteries against it on stations more advantageous to themselves. The rising church of Christ had nothing to support it, but the wisdom and the works of its

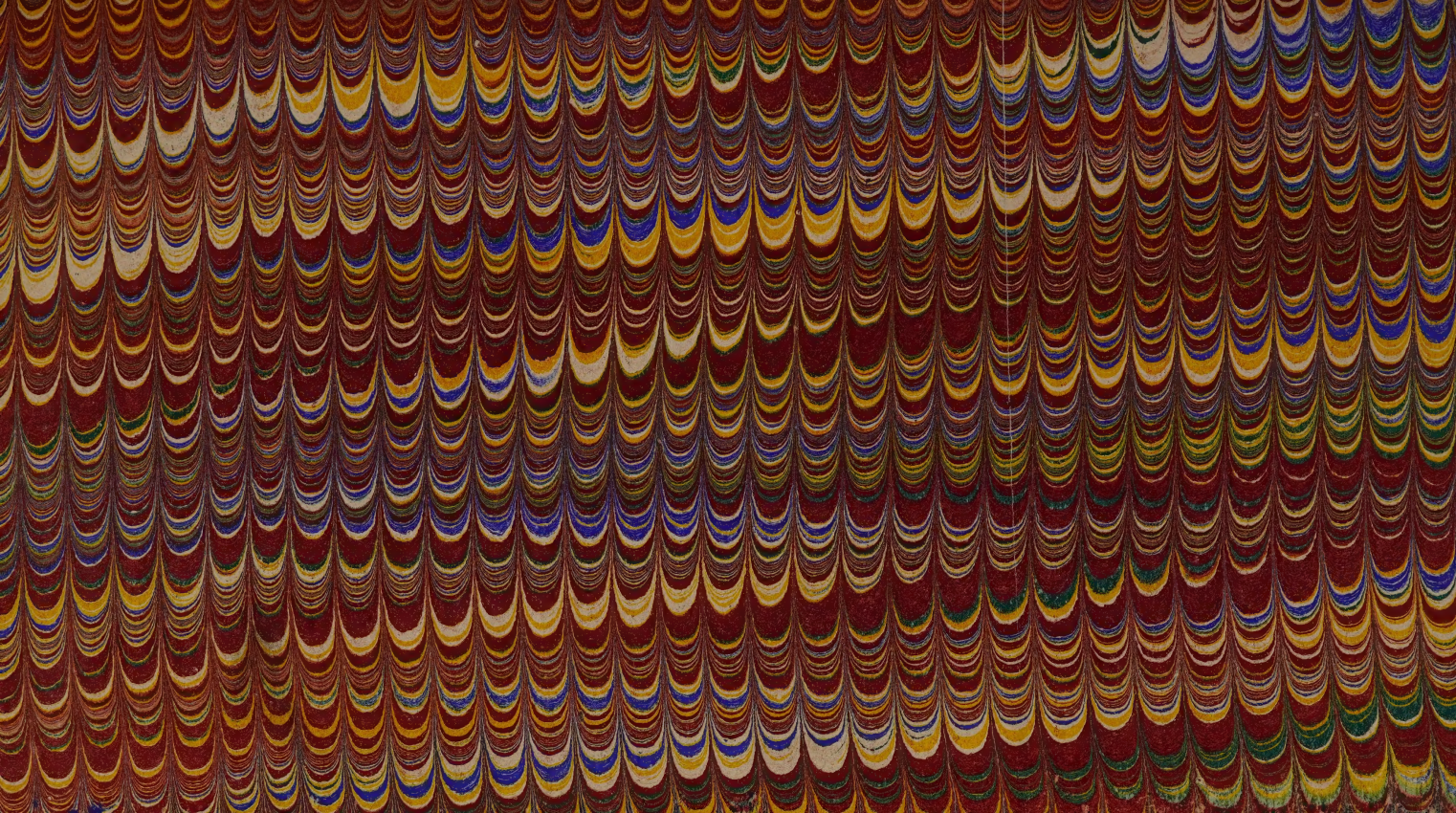
founder; and all the violent passions of men, as so many convulsive elements, conspired to shake it to pieces. If any impression could have been made upon it, Apion and his coadjutors would not have failed to produce it, in circumstances so favourable. They had wit, learning, eloquence, reputation, and all the powers of the world on their side; they had every opportunity to ascertain the real truth, and every advantage for bringing to light any falsehood or imposture in the cause which they undertook to combat. Yet, if we look to the dispute between them and Philo and Josephus, we can venture to pronounce that the victory is signally on their side; we see them characterized by sobriety of mind, by a zeal for truth, by the reasonableness and importance of the system which they defended, as well as by very superior learning and talents. Indeed, so far are they raised in these respects above their antagonists, as is the pole above the centre of the earth. Upon these, in their attempts to bind mankind anew in the fetters, which had long held them in vice, ignorance, and superstition, we look down, as weltering in an abyss of folly and depravity; while Philo and Josephus invite our views upwards, arrayed in the purest, serenest light. They stand on an eminence with the gospel in their hands, under the name of the Mosaic law, above those

clouds of corruption and obscurity, which have since gathered around it, and tarnished its native lustre. They defend it, and hold it forth to the world as a system of divine philosophy, worthy of God to impart, and necessary for man to receive; as simple, rational, without mystery or error, and beneficial in its effects on the hearts and understandings of mankind, as the dews which fertilize, or the breeze that fans the summer.

Fourthly, as Josephus and Philo are christian writers, and have described the institutions and opinions of the first christian converts, we have new and authentic sources to ascertain the doctrines of the gospel, as first delivered to the saints. Striking and important will appear the information which they suggest on this interesting subject; and the development of it will exclusively occupy the succeeding volume in *these Researches.*

THE END.

J. G. BARNARD, SKINNER-STREET, LONDON.



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